IV

(Informacje)

INFORMACJE INSTYTUCJI, ORGANÓW I JEDNOSTEK ORGANIZACYJNYCH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

PYTANIA PISEMNE Z ODPOWIEDZIĄ

Pytania pisemne skierowane przez posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego i odpowiedzi na te pytania udzielone przez instytucję Unii Europejskiej

(2014/C 335/01)

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(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003094/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Niechęć małych firm do unijnych dotacji

Na spore wsparcie ze środków Unii Europejskiej mogą liczyć mikro-, małe i średnie przedsiębiorstwa. Jednakże według badań Instytutu Badań i Analiz oraz portalu firmy.net tylko 14 % twierdzi, że skorzysta ze wsparcia. Korzystanie ze środków strukturalnych Unii Europejskiej jest bardzo korzystne dla przedsiębiorstw, dla ich rozwoju, dlatego niepokoją mnie powyższe dane. W związku z tym mam kilka pytań do Komisji.

1. Według mnie powodem obecnej sytuacji jest między innymi duża biurokratyzacja całej procedury starania się o dotacje dla przedsiębiorstw. To z pewnością zniechęca część drobnych przedsiębiorców do aplikowania o dotacje. Czy Komisja rozważa uproszczenie procedur związanych z pozyskiwaniem funduszy na działalność przedsiębiorstw?

2. Innym ważnym problemem jest na pewno niedostateczne doinformowanie o możliwościach płynących z unijnych funduszy. Co zamierza zrobić Komisja, aby zwiększyć świadomość przedsiębiorców o korzyściach z funduszy?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Michela Barniera w imieniu Komisji
(12 maja 2014 r.)

Od dnia 1 stycznia 2013 r. obowiązuje nowe rozporządzenie finansowe, które stanowi główny punkt odniesienia dla zasad i procedur regulujących ustanawianie i realizację budżetu UE ([1]).

Uproszczenie stanowi jeden z trzech głównych obszarów, których dotyczą zmiany wprowadzone przez nowe rozporządzenie finansowe, w szczególności pod względem ograniczenia biurokracji, przyspieszenia procedur oraz przesunięcia punktu ciężkości z dokumentów papierowych na efektywność. Zmiany te mają doprowadzić do krótszych terminów płatności, przyjęcia celów w zakresie czasu oczekiwania na przyznanie dotacji, uproszczenia wymogów administracyjnych dla większej liczby dotacji o niskiej wartości oraz do dalszego uproszczenia i elastyczności przepisów dotyczących udzielania dotacji. Do rozporządzenia włączono również środki zmierzające do zwiększenia odpowiedzialności, należytego zarządzania finansami i ochrony interesów finansowych UE.

Aby umożliwić przedsiębiorstwom dostęp do informacji na temat źródeł finansowania ze środków UE, Komisja uruchomiła portal internetowy na temat wszystkich instrumentów finansowych UE. ([2]) Portal zapewnia przystępne i aktualne informacje na temat tego, w jaki sposób przedsiębiorcy i MŚP mogą uzyskać dostęp do ponad 100 mld euro finansowania ze środków UE z różnych źródeł.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm
([2]) www.access2finance.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003094/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Small businesses unwilling to apply for EU funding

Micro-, small and medium-sized businesses are entitled to significant amounts of EU funding. However, according to research carried out by the Research and Analysis Institute in Poland and the firmy.net website, only 14% of firms say that they will make use of such funding. There are many benefits to be had — for businesses and their development — from taking advantage of EU structural funding. That is why the research findings are so worrying. With this in mind:

1. I believe that one of the reasons behind the current situation is the high degree of bureaucracy surrounding the entire procedure for applying for business grants. It is certainly discouraging a number of small businesses from applying for funding. Is the Commission considering simplifying the procedures involved in applying for business grants?

2. Another major problem is of course the fact that not enough information is available about the possibilities stemming from EU funds. What is the Commission intending to do to raise awareness among businesspeople about the benefits of the funds?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

As from 1 January 2013 the Commission has had a new Financial Regulation in place, which is the main point of reference for the principles and procedures governing the establishment and implementation of the EU budget ([1]).

Simplification is one of the three main areas of change in the new Financial Regulation, in particular as regards cutting red tape, speeding up procedures and shifting the focus from paperwork to performance. These changes address shorter payment deadlines, time-to-grant targets and indicative deadlines, lighter administrative requirements for a larger group of low-value grants, further simplification and flexibility in the grant rules. Further measures to strengthen accountability, sound financial management and protection of EU financial interests are also included.

To address the need of businesses to have information on EU funding opportunities, the Commission launched a single online portal ([2]) on all EU financial instruments. The portal provides easy and up-to-date information on how entrepreneurs and SMEs can access over EUR 100 billion of EU financing from various intermediaries.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm
([2]) www.access2finance.eu

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003095/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Strukturalna reforma bankowa

W dniu 29 stycznia Komisja Europejska opublikowała projekt legislacyjny dotyczący regulacji reform strukturalnych w unijnym sektorze bankowym. Zaproponowana regulacja rozwija rekomendacje zawarte w sprawozdaniu opublikowanym w październiku 2012 r. przez unijną grupę wysokiego szczebla, mającą za zadanie zreformowanie unijnego sektora bankowego. Mówiąc krótko, zaproponowana regulacja ma na celu poprawienie elastyczności unijnego systemu bankowego. Cel ma być osiągnięty poprzez wymaganie od banków, w szczególności tych uznawanych za „zbyt duże by upaść" do wprowadzenia reform strukturalnych.

1. W jaki sposób banki mają zapewnić, że ich polityka wynagrodzeniowa nie zachęca, czy też nie nagradza bezpośrednio lub pośrednio, przeprowadzania przez pracownika banku obrotu na własny rachunek?

2. Na ile pewna jest przewidywana data wejścia w życie przepisów – 1 stycznia 2017 r.?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Michela Barniera w imieniu Komisji
(10 czerwca 2014 r.)

Proponowane rozporządzenie stanowi, że polityka wynagrodzeń stosowana przez podmioty objęte tym rozporządzeniem nie powinna zezwalać na ustalenia w zakresie wynagrodzeń, które nagradzają prowadzenie zakazanego handlu na własny rachunek lub zachęcają do jego prowadzenia. Banki będą musiały zatem zapewnić, by umowy zawierane przez nie z kadrą zarządzającą i pracownikami były zgodne z przepisami wspomnianego rozporządzenia.

Nie naruszając przepisów IV dyrektywy w sprawie wymogów kapitałowych (dyrektywa 2013/36/WE) dotyczących wynagrodzeń, pracownicy, a w szczególności osoby dokonujące transakcji, mogliby na przykład podlegać polityce wynagrodzeń, której podstawą są lub która uwzględnia opłaty i prowizje od transakcji dokonywanych na rzecz klientów, a nie osiąganie zysków z samych pozycji handlowych.

Harmonogram Komisji jest ambitny, ale realistyczny. W oczekiwaniu na wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego wniosek został omówiony na nieformalnym posiedzeniu Rady ECOFIN w Atenach w dniu 2 kwietnia 2014 r., a Komisja ściśle współpracuje z obecną i przyszłą prezydencją w celu dokonania postępów w negocjacjach w Radzie. Przewiduje się, że proponowane rozporządzenie zostanie przyjęte przez Parlament Europejski i Radę w 2015 r. Następnie, w celu wdrożenia kluczowych przepisów, Komisja ma przyjąć wymagane akty delegowane do dnia 1 stycznia 2016 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003095/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Structural reform in the banking sector

On 29 January 2014 the Commission published a legislative proposal for structural reform in the EU banking sector. The rules being put forward draw on the recommendations set out in the report submitted in October 2012 by the high-level expert group on reforming the structure of the EU banking sector. The basic aim of those rules is to make the Union's banking system more flexible. This is to be achieved by requiring banks — in particular those seen as 'too big to fail' — to carry out structural reforms.

1. How are banks to ensure that their remuneration policy neither encourages nor rewards, either directly or indirectly, proprietary trading by their employees?

2. How likely is it that the new rules will come into force on 1 January 2017 as planned?

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

The proposed Regulation provides that the remuneration policy of entities that would be covered by the regulation should not permit compensation arrangements designed to reward or incentivize prohibited proprietary trading. Banks would therefore have to ensure that their contracts with executives and employees comply with the regulation.

Without prejudice to the remuneration rules laid down in the Capital Requirement Directive IV (Directive 2013/36/EC), employees, in particular traders, could for example be subject to a remuneration policy that is based on or takes into account fees and commissions on client related trades and not on making money on the trading positions themselves.

The Commission's timetable is ambitious but realistic. Pending the European Parliament elections, the proposal has been discussed at the informal Ecofin held in Athens on 2 April 2014, and the Commission is cooperating closely with the current and incoming presidencies to progress with the negotiations in the Council. The proposed Regulation is foreseen to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2015. Subsequently, the Commission would adopt the required delegated acts for implementation of key provisions by 1 January 2016.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003096/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Kukurydza GMO 1507

Chciałbym wyrazić zaniepokojenie sprawą kukurydzy GMO 1507. Przeciwko dopuszczeniu do uprawy w Unii Europejskiej tej odmiany genetycznie modyfikowanej kukurydzy opowiedziało się aż 19 państw członkowskich. Mimo to nie wystarczyło to, aby powstrzymać dopuszczenie kukurydzy na unijny rynek.

Chciałbym zaapelować do Komisji o uszanowanie zdania 19 państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej i ostatecznie – o niewprowadzenie do uprawy kukurydzy GMO 1507. Wprowadzenie kukurydzy GMO 1507 budzi sporo wątpliwości. Czy Komisja weźmie pod uwagę sprzeciw znacznej liczby państw i pomimo wymaganej większości kwalifikowanej nie wprowadzi kukurydzy GMO 1507?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(12 maja 2014 r.)

Na posiedzeniu Rady do Spraw Ogólnych w dniu 11 lutego 2014 r., na którym wszczęto publiczną debatę dotyczącą wniosku o zatwierdzenie kukurydzy Pioneer 1507, nie można było osiągnąć większości kwalifikowanej (260 z 352 głosów) ani za udzieleniem zezwolenia, ani przeciw jego udzieleniu. W wyniku tego upłynął termin przyjęcia decyzji przez Radę. Zgodnie z przepisami regulującymi procedurę komitetową mającymi zastosowanie w tym przypadku ([1]) Komisja przyjmuje wniosek w razie braku kwalifikowanej większości głosów za wnioskiem lub przeciw niemu.

([1]) Decyzja Rady 1999/468/WE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003096/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: GMO maize 1507

I would like to register my concerns regarding GMO maize 1507. A grand total of 19 Member States are opposed to authorising the cultivation of this genetically modified variety of maize in the European Union. This, however, was not enough to prevent the variety from being allowed to circulate on the EU market.

I call on the Commission to respect the opinions of the 19 Member States and, ultimately, not to allow GMO maize 1507 to be cultivated. The introduction of GMO maize 1507 cultivation raises many concerns. Will the Commission take the opposition of a significant number of Member States into consideration and refrain from introducing GMO maize 1507, regardless of the required qualified majority?

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

At the meeting of the General Affairs Council on 11 February 2014 during which a public debate was held on a proposal to authorise Pioneer maize 1507, a qualified majority (260 votes out of 352 votes), either for or against the authorisation, could not be reached. On the contrary, it allowed the deadline for a Council Decision to elapse. Under the comitology rules which apply in this case ([1]), the Commission shall adopt the proposal in the absence of a qualified majority for or against the proposal.

([1]) Council Decision 1999/468/EC.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003097/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Prognoza makroekonomiczna dla Czech

Ostatnia prognoza makroekonomiczna dla Czech zawiera kilka niespodzianek. Kilka liczb w szczególności przyciąga uwagę. Pokazują one możliwe problemy, z jakimi zmierzać się będzie rząd czeski. Prognoza wychodzenia z recesji, przyspieszenia wzrostu gospodarczego, łagodnej inflacji i względnie wysokiego bezrobocia została dostarczona przez Komisję w dniu 26 lutego.

1. Jedną z najciekawszych informacji jest przewidywanie Komisji, że deficyt publiczny w stosunku do PKB wzrośnie z 2,8 procent do 3,3 procent w 2014 r. Na jakiej podstawie Komisja wyciągnęła takie wnioski?

2. Czy Komisja zamierza przeprowadzić podobną prognozę makroekonomiczną dla Polski?

3. Jak wygląda proces wychodzenia z recesji w pozostałych państwach członkowskich?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Olliego Rehna w imieniu Komisji
(25 czerwca 2014 r.)

1. Według europejskiej prognozy gospodarczej z zimy 2014 r. ([1]), opublikowanej przez Komisję w dniu 25 lutego 2014 r., przewiduje się pogorszenie deficytu sektora instytucji rządowych i samorządowych w Republice Czeskiej z 2,7 proc. PKB w 2013 r. do 2,8 proc. PKB w 2014 r. i 3,3 proc. PKB w 2015 r. Niemniej jednak prognozy te są już nieaktualne, gdyż z zawiadomienia o deficycie i długu sektora instytucji rządowych i samorządowych za 2013 r., opublikowanego przez Eurostat w dniu 23 kwietnia 2014 r., wynika, że nastąpiła znacząca i niespodziewana poprawa deficytu za 2013 r. (do 1,5 proc. PKB), co z kolei ma wpływ na prognozy Komisji na lata 2014 i 2015. Według prognozy Komisji z wiosny 2014 r., opublikowanej w dniu 5 maja 2014 r., deficyt sektora instytucji rządowych i samorządowych osiągnie 1,9 proc. PKB i 2,4 proc. PKB odpowiednio w 2014 i 2015 r. Pogorszenie to jest spowodowane głównie wzrostem spożycia publicznego i inwestycji publicznych zarówno w 2014, jak i w 2015 r. oraz reformą podatkową w 2015 r. zwiększającą deficyt.

2. Komisja trzy razy w roku publikuje swoją regularną prognozę makroekonomiczną zawierającą prognozy makroekonomiczne i budżetowe dla wszystkich państw członkowskich. Najnowsza prognoza dotycząca Polski znajduje się w rozdziale dotyczącym tego kraju ([2]) w europejskiej prognozie gospodarczej z wiosny 2014 r.

3. Prognoza Komisji z wiosny 2014 r. wskazuje na kontynuację ożywienia gospodarczego w UE, które powinno wkrótce być widoczne we wszystkich krajach. W zrost realnego PKB ma osiągnąć poziom 1,6 proc. w UE i 1,2 proc. w strefie euro w 2014 r. i nadal zwiększać się w 2015 r., osiągając odpowiednio 2,0 i 1,7 proc. Stopniowo poprawiają się także wyniki gospodarcze bardziej podatnych na zagrożenia gospodarek UE. Największym zagrożeniem dla perspektywy wzrostu gospodarczego jest utrata zaufania z powodu spowolnienia reform.

([1]) Zob. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2014_spring/pl_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003097/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Macroeconomic forecast for the Czech Republic

The latest macroeconomic forecast for the Czech Republic contains few surprises, but a few figures catch the eye as possible problems as the government goes forward. The Commission forecast, published on 26 February 2014, paints a picture of emergence from recession and strengthening growth amid mild inflation and relatively high unemployment.

1. One of the most interesting predictions made by the Commission is that the public deficit to GDP ratio will rise from 2.8% in 2014 to 3.3% in 2015. How did the Commission arrive at these figures?

2. Does it intend to publish a macroeconomic forecast for Poland as well?

3. To what extent are the other Member States emerging from recession?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2014)

1. The Winter 2014 European Economic Forecast ([1]) published by the Commission on 25 February 2014 projected a deterioration in the general government deficit of the Czech Republic from 2.7% of GDP in 2013 to 2.8% of GDP in 2014 and 3.3% of GDP in 2015. However, these projections are now outdated as the notification of the 2013 government deficit and debt released by Eurostat on 23 April 2014 showed a significant and unexpected improvement in the 2013 deficit (to 1.5% of GDP) which in turn influences the Commission projections for 2014 and 2015. The Commission Spring 2014 forecast released on 5 May 2014 expects the general government deficit to reach 1.9% of GDP and 2.4% of GDP in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The deterioration is mainly due to an increase in government consumption and investment in both 2014 and 2015 and to a deficit-increasing tax reform in 2015.

2. The Commission publishes its regular macroeconomic forecast including macroeconomic and fiscal projections for all Member States three times a year. For the latest forecast for Poland, please check the country chapter ([2]) of the Spring 2014 European Economic Forecast.

3. The Commission's Spring 2014 forecast points to a continuing economic recovery in the EU that is now expected to become broad-based across countries. Real GDP growth is set to reach 1.6% in the EU and 1.2% in the euro area in 2014, and to improve further in 2015 to 2.0% and 1.7% respectively. There is also a gradual strengthening of economic performance in the more vulnerable EU economies. The largest downside risk to the growth outlook remains a loss of confidence due to a stalling of reforms.

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2014_spring/pl_en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003099/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Dramatyczna sytuacja praw człowieka w Kazachstanie

Międzynarodowe organizacje zajmujące się prawami człowieka na świecie alarmują o dramatycznej sytuacji w Kazachstanie w związku ze stosowaniem tortur i użyciem siły przez tamtejszą policję i siły bezpieczeństwa oraz przeprowadzaniem fikcyjnych procesów sądowych, których wyroki opierane są na fałszywych zeznaniach wymuszanych na oskarżonych, którzy przetrzymywani są w ciężkich warunkach oraz poddawani znęcaniu przez organy ścigania. Wbrew deklaracjom prezydenta Nursułtana Nazarbajewa, kazachskie władze nie robią nic, aby wyeliminować stosowanie przemocy z pracy organów bezpieczeństwa, a winni dotychczasowych aktów przemocy nie są poddawani rzetelnym procesom sądowym.

Jak do tej dramatycznej sytuacji odniesie się Wysoka Przedstawiciel?

Czy UE może podjąć kroki mające na celu wypełnienie przez prezydenta Nazarbajewa deklaracji o zaprzestaniu stosowania tortur?

Czy UE może doprowadzić do ustanowienia międzynarodowej komisji w celu zbadania rzeczywistej sytuacji w kazachskich więzieniach?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(22 maja 2014 r.)

ESDZ uważnie przygląda się sytuacji praw człowieka w Kazachstanie, w tym poprzez nadzorowanie postępowań sądowych przeciwko obrońcom praw człowieka oraz przez utrzymywanie bliskich kontaktów z krajowymi organizacjami społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, w tym koalicją organizacji pozarządowych w sprawie zakazu stosowania tortur.

W 2013 r. przyjęto nową ustawę ustanawiającą krajowy mechanizm prewencji przeciwdziałający torturom oraz innym formom okrutnego, nieludzkiego lub poniżającego traktowania i kar. Zgodnie z obowiązującymi przepisami członkowie krajowego mechanizmu prewencji mają prawo do otrzymywania skarg i prowadzenia posiedzeń bez dozoru z zatrzymanymi w różnych obiektach, w tym więzieniach, aresztach śledczych, wojskowych i policyjnych ośrodkach detencyjnych, ośrodkach zatrzymań dla nieletnich i placówkach kształcenia specjalnego, a także w zakładach obowiązkowego leczenia gruźlicy, narkomanii i problemów psychicznych.

Chociaż w 2014 r. kilku pracownikom organów egzekwowania prawa postawiono zarzuty popełnienia przestępstwa wobec więźniów w ośrodkach zatrzymań, należy poczynić większe starania w celu zagwarantowania, że wszystkie skargi dotyczące stosowania tortur będą przedmiotem właściwego dochodzenia i że sprawcy będą ścigani sądownie.

Kazachstan przyjął państwowy program reform krajowego systemu więziennictwa, zmniejszenia liczby osadzonych i poprawy warunków w więzieniach. W ramach działań reformatorskich międzynarodowe organizacje pozarządowe, takie jak Penal Reform International, służą poradami i wiedzą fachową, w tym za pośrednictwem projektów finansowanych przez UE.

Zarówno w kontaktach oficjalnych, jak i nieoficjalnych, a zwłaszcza na posiedzeniach w ramach dialogu między UE a Kazachstanem na temat praw człowieka, UE w dalszym ciągu zachęca Kazachstan do należytego wypełniania swych międzynarodowych zobowiązań w zakresie ochrony praw człowieka.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003099/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Grave human rights situation in Kazakhstan

International human rights organisations are expressing alarm at the grave situation in Kazakhstan with regard to torture and the use of force by police and security forces in the country. They are also concerned about sham trials taking place, with sentences being handed down on the basis of the accused being forced to make false confessions, and having been held in extremely difficult conditions and abused by the law enforcement authorities. Contrary to statements made by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh authorities are doing nothing to stop the security services using violence in the course of their duties, and those responsible for acts of violence are not being prosecuted properly.

How will the High Representative react to this grave situation?

Can the EU take steps with a view to ensuring that President Nazarbayev keeps to his word with regard to abandoning the use of torture?

Can the EU set the ball rolling with a view to the setting-up of an international commission to establish what conditions are really like in Kazakhstan's prisons?

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

The EEAS is closely following the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, including through monitoring of legal proceedings against human rights defenders, and by maintaining close contacts with civil society organisations in the country, including the Coalition of NGOs against Torture.

In 2013, a new law was adopted establishing a national preventative mechanism (NPM) against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or humiliating treatment or punishment. According to the legislation, NPM members have the right to receive complaints and hold unaccompanied meetings with detainees in a variety of facilities, including prisons, pre-trial detention centres, military and police detention centres, juvenile detention centres and special education centres, as well as facilities for the compulsory treatment of tuberculosis, drug addiction, and psychiatric issues.

Although in 2014 a few law enforcement agents were prosecuted on charges of perpetrating criminal acts against inmates in detention places, greater efforts are needed to ensure that all complaints of torture are properly investigated, and that those responsible are prosecuted.

Kazakhstan has adopted a state programme for the reform of the country's penitentiary system, reduction of the prison population and improvement of prison conditions. International NGOs such as Penal Reform International provide advice and expertise in the course of the reform effort, including through EU funded projects.

The EU continues to encourage Kazakhstan, in both informal and formal contacts, and most notably in the context of the meetings of the EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue, to fulfil its international commitments with regard to protection of human rights.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003100/14
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Dyrektywa dotycząca e-handlu

W dniu 13 czerwca 2014 r. ma wejść w życie nowa unijna dyrektywa dotycząca e-handlu. Istnieją poważne przesłanki świadczące o tym, że nowe wytyczne mające na celu usprawnienie rynku sprzedaży internetowej oraz uczynienie go bezpieczniejszym poprzez ujednolicenie zasad rządzących tym rynkiem mogą go spowolnić i poważnie zaszkodzić małym e-przedsiębiorstwom. Przerzucenie odpowiedzialności finansowej za szkody powstałe podczas transportu oraz obowiązek pokrycia kosztów zwracanej przesyłki na e-sklepy uczyni je mniej konkurencyjnymi w stosunku do sklepów tradycyjnych, ponieważ aby zrekompensować te koszty e-sklepy podniosą ceny produktów. Dodatkowe obowiązki finansowe uderzą przede wszystkim w mikroprzedsiębiorców, którzy w Polsce stanowią znaczący odsetek wszystkich handlowców.

Czy Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę z trudnej sytuacji, w jakiej znajdą się małe e-przedsiębiorstwa po wejściu w życie nowej dyrektywy dotyczącej e-handlu? Czy są planowane działania mające na celu wsparcie małych przedsiębiorców?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(5 czerwca 2014 r.)

Państwa członkowskie będą musiały dokonać transpozycji dyrektywy 2011/83/UE w sprawie praw konsumentów [1] do dnia 13 czerwca 2014 r. Tekst dyrektywy współprawodawcy uzgodnili po trzech latach negocjacji. Dyrektywa ta ma na celu wzmocnienie ochrony konsumentów, w szczególności w odniesieniu do transakcji handlu elektronicznego. Jednocześnie jej zharmonizowane przepisy sprzyjać będą przedsiębiorcom realizującym internetowe transakcje handlowe, którzy będą mieć do czynienia z mniejszą fragmentacją krajowych systemów ochrony konsumentów.

W dyrektywie w sprawie praw konsumentów rzeczywiście przewidziano, że ryzyko przechodzi na konsumenta z chwilą wejścia w fizyczne posiadanie towarów. Przepis ten, który odzwierciedla istniejące podejście w wielu krajowych systemach prawnych, jest uzasadniony, ponieważ towary podlegają kontroli przedsiębiorcy lub wybranego przez niego przewoźnika podczas przewozu. Jednak ryzyko przechodzi na konsumenta już z chwilą dostarczenia towarów przewoźnikowi, jeżeli to konsument zlecił przewoźnikowi ich przewóz, a przedsiębiorca nie oferował takiej możliwości. Ponadto przedmiotowa dyrektywa pozostaje bez uszczerbku dla jakichkolwiek roszczeń, jakie przedsiębiorca mógłby mieć wobec przewoźnika.

W przeciwieństwie do tego, co twierdzi szanowny Pan Poseł, dyrektywa nie nakłada kosztów zwrotu towarów na przedsiębiorców handlu elektronicznego, o ile spełnili oni swoje obowiązki w zakresie udzielania stosownych informacji konsumentom. Ten przepis dyrektywy w sprawie praw konsumentów jest rzeczywiście korzystniejszy dla przedsiębiorców niż zasady minimalnej harmonizacji poprzedniej dyrektywy 97/7/WE w sprawie ochrony konsumentów w umowach zawieranych na odległość, zgodnie z którą niektóre państwa członkowskie wymagały od przedsiębiorców również ponoszenia kosztów zwrotu towarów. Ponadto dyrektywa pozwala przedsiębiorcom na niepokrywanie wszelkich dodatkowych kosztów dostawy do konsumenta, jeśli konsument wyraźnie wybrał dostawę kosztowniejszą od oferowanej standardowej.

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[1] Dyrektywa Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady 2011/83/UE z dnia 25 października 2011 r. w sprawie praw konsumentów, zmieniająca dyrektywę Rady 93/13/EWG i dyrektywę 1999/44/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady oraz uchylająca dyrektywę Rady 85/577/EWG i dyrektywę 97/7/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady, Dz.U. L 304 z 22.11.2011, s. 64-88.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003100/14
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Directive on e-commerce

On 13 June 2014, a new EU directive on e-commerce will enter into force. There are serious indications that the new guidelines, which are supposed to improve the market for online sales and make it more secure by harmonising the rules governing that market, could in fact slow down the market and do serious harm to small e-businesses. Transferring financial liability for losses arising during shipping to e-shops and imposing an obligation on e-shops to cover the costs of return shipping will make it more difficult for them to compete with traditional shops, as e-shops will be forced to raise their prices in order to recoup their costs. The additional financial obligations will hit micro-enterprises — which account for a significant proportion of all traders in Poland — particularly hard.

Does the Commission realise just how difficult a situation small e-companies will be facing once the new directive on e-commerce enters into force? Are any measures planned with a view to supporting small businesses?

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

Member States will have until 13 June 2014 to transpose the Consumer Rights Directive 2011/83/EU (CRD) ([1]). This directive was agreed by the co-legislators after three years of negotiations. The CRD aims at strengthening consumer protection, in particular in eCommerce transactions. At the same time, its harmonised rules will benefit cross-border eCommerce traders, who will be confronted with less fragmentation of the national consumer protection regimes.

The CRD indeed stipulates that the risk passes to the consumer upon acquisition of the physical possession of the goods. This rule, which reflects the existing approach under many national laws, is justified because the trader or a carrier chosen by the trader have the goods under their control during the transport. However, the risk passes to the consumer already upon delivery of the goods to the carrier where that carrier has been commissioned by the consumer and was not offered by the trader. Furthermore, the CRD is without prejudice to any claims the trader could have against the carrier.

Contrary to what is asserted by the Honourable Member, the CRD does not impose the cost of returning the goods on eCommerce traders, provided they have complied with their information duties. This CRD provision is actually more favourable to traders than the minimum harmonisation rules of the previous Distance Selling Directive 97/7/EC, under which some Member States required traders to also bear the cost of returning the goods. Furthermore, the CRD allows the traders not to reimburse any supplementary delivery costs to the consumer, if the consumer had expressly opted for a more expensive delivery than the standard one offered.

([1]) Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25.10.2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EEC and Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 64-88.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003101/14
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Dyrektywa w sprawie zużytego sprzętu elektrycznego i elektronicznego (WEEE)

W lutym 2014 r. weszła w życie znowelizowana dyrektywa Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady 2012/19/UE z dnia 4 lipca 2012 r. w sprawie zużytego sprzętu elektrycznego i elektronicznego (WEEE). Nowe zalecenia mają usprawnić i uszczelnić zarządzanie elektroodpadami. Ustawa przewiduje powolny wzrost poziomu recyklingu, który w 2016 r. ma osiągnąć 40 %, aż po 65 % poziom przetwarzalności w roku 2021. W przypadku Polski, konieczne będzie podniesienie poziomu zbierania elektroodpadów z aktualnych 4 kg do 10 kg na jednego mieszkańca w 2021 r.

Czy UE może w jakikolwiek sposób wesprzeć państwa członkowskie na drodze skuteczniejszego gospodarowania elektroodpadami?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(15 maja 2014 r.)

Ponieważ ze zużytego sprzętu elektrycznego i elektronicznego (WEEE) można odzyskiwać duże ilości miedzi, złota, platyny i metali ziem rzadkich, gospodarowanie tym cennym strumieniem odpadów jest opłacalne. Takie „górnictwo miejskie" zmniejsza również zależność Europy od importu wielu z tych materiałów. W tym celu należy jednak prowadzić selektywną zbiórkę WEEE.

W ramach budżetu UE Komisja może udostępnić wkłady finansowe na rzecz projektów i inicjatyw, które wspierają realizację priorytetów polityki UE. Działalność związana z gospodarowaniem odpadami może kwalifikować się w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju Regionalnego ([1]) i Funduszu Spójności ([2]).

Wsparcie finansowe może zostać również udostępnione za pośrednictwem dwóch programów szczegółowych, funduszu LIFE i programu ekoinnowacji oraz Programu ramowego na rzecz konkurencyjności i innowacji. Dodatkowe informacje są dostępne na stronie http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm.

Inne możliwości finansowania istnieją również w ramach programu „Horyzont 2020" ([3]), instrumentu finansowego służącego wdrażaniu „Unii innowacji", która jest przewodnią inicjatywą strategii „Europa 2020" mającą na celu zapewnienie konkurencyjności Europy na świecie. Wszystkie zaproszenia do składania wniosków w ramach programu „Horyzont 2020" są dostępne na stronie internetowej http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html.

Fundusze na rzecz racjonalnych i zrównoważonych projektów inwestycyjnych w dziedzinie gospodarowania odpadami mogą być również udostępnione przez Europejski Bank Inwestycyjny (zob. http://www.eib.org/).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/focus/index_pl.cfm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/cohesion/index_en.cfm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-climate_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003101/14
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)

The revised Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) entered into force in February 2014. The new recommendations are intended to facilitate and tighten up the management of WEEE. This legislation provides for a gradual increase in the level of recycling, to 40% in 2016 and as much as 65% in 2021. In Poland the level of WEEE collection will need to rise from the current 4kg per inhabitant to 10 kg in 2021.

Is the EU able to provide any support to help Member States manage WEEE more effectively?

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

The important quantities of copper, gold, platinum and rare earth metals that can be extracted from WEEE make managing this valuable waste stream economically viable. Such 'urban mining' also reduces Europe's dependence for many of these materials on imports. However in order for this to happen, WEEE needs to be separately collected.

Through the EU budget, the Commission can make available financial contributions to projects and initiatives that promote EU policy priorities. Waste management may be eligible under the European Regional Development Fund ([1]) and the Cohesion Fund ([2]).

Financial support may also be available through two specific programmes, the LIFE fund and the Eco-Innovation and Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. Further information is available on:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm

Funding opportunities also exist under 'Horizon 2020' ([3]), the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. All calls under Horizon 2020 are available on the web-page: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

Finance for sound and sustainable investment projects on waste management can also be provided by the European Investment Bank (see http://www.eib.org/).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/regional/index_en.cfm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/cohesion/index_en.cfm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-climate_en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003102/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Kara śmierci na Białorusi

We współczesnej Europie Białoruś, jako ostatni kraj na starym kontynencie, nie zrezygnowała ze stosowania kary śmierci. Nie skłoniło jej nawet do tego zawieszenie członkostwa tego kraju w Radzie Europy w 1998 r. Według różnych statystyk, od 1990 r. na Białorusi wykonano minimum 300 wyroków tego typu. Istnieją realne podejrzenia, że nie wszystkie procesy były sprawiedliwe. Ponadto proces egzekucji przebiega w warunkach skrajnie niehumanitarnych – osądzony ginie od pojedynczego strzału w tył głowy, a jego rodzinę informuje się wyłącznie o fakcie wykonania wyroku i pozbawia informacji o miejscu pochowku.

W jaki sposób UE może wpłynąć na Białoruś, aby skłonić jej rząd do wycofania kary śmierci?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(18 czerwca 2014 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/wiceprzewodnicząca uważnie śledzi sytuację na Białorusi i przy każdej okazji porusza kwestie budzące obawy UE – publicznie i prywatnie w kontaktach z władzami Białorusi. Obejmuje to wszelkie kwestie i sprawy dotyczące poszanowania praw człowieka, demokracji i rządów prawa, w tym kwestię kary śmierci.

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/wiceprzewodnicząca wydaje publiczne oświadczenia po każdym nowym wyroku lub egzekucji, w których wzywa Białoruś – jedyny kraj w Europie nadal stosujący karę śmierci – do przyłączenia się do ogólnoświatowego moratorium na wykonywanie kary śmierci, jako pierwszego kroku na drodze do jej powszechnego zniesienia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003102/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Death penalty in Belarus

Belarus is the only country in Europe today which has not abandoned the death penalty. Not even its suspension from the Council of Europe in 1998 persuaded the country to change its stance on this issue. According to various statistics, since 1990 at least 300 executions have been carried out in Belarus. And there is good reason to suspect that not all of those involved received a fair trial. Furthermore, the executions are carried out in extremely inhumane conditions — the condemned are killed with a single shot to the back of the head; their family are only informed that the execution has been carried out and no information is given about the place of burial.

How can the EU bring pressure to bear on Belarus to convince its Government to abandon the death penalty?

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

The HR/VP follows closely the situation in Belarus and takes every opportunity to raise the EU's concerns — publically and privately — with the Belarusian authorities. This includes the questions related to any issues and cases related to respect of human rights, democracy and rule of law, including the issue of death penalty.

The HR/VP issues public statement after each new sentence or execution, where she urges Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its universal abolition.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003103/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Kazachstan: sprawa Arona Atabeka

W 2006 r. niesłusznie skazano na karę 16 lat pozbawienia wolności kazachskiego poetę, dziennikarza i opozycjonistę, Arona Atabeka. Władze oskarżyły go o kierowanie protestem ludzi, których domy przeznaczono pod rozbiórkę. Podczas obrony domów doszło do starć z policją, a w ich wyniku – do śmierci jednego z policjantów. Arona Atabeka, wraz z trzema innymi osobami, uznano za współorganizatora demonstracji oraz winnego śmierci funkcjonariusza. Wyrok oparto na zeznaniach dwóch świadków, którzy przed sądem odwołali swe wcześniejsze zeznania, tłumacząc, że zostały one na nich wymuszone.

Czy Wysokiej Przedstawiciel znana jest sytuacja Arona Atabeka oraz pozostałych osób niesłusznie osądzonych za przewodzenie strajkowi w obronie domów mieszkalnych? Czy UE podejmie kroki mające na celu ich uwolnienie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(28 maja 2014 r.)

ESDZ uważnie śledzi sytuację w zakresie praw człowieka w Kazachstanie, w szczególności szereg niepokojących przypadków, w tym sprawę Arona Atabeka.

W 2007 r. Aron Atabek został skazany pod zarzutem organizowania masowych rozruchów i skazany na 18 lat pozbawienia wolności w zakładzie karnym o zaostrzonym rygorze. W sądzie nie przedstawiono żadnych dowodów łączących go bezpośrednio ze śmiercią funkcjonariusza policji i użytą wobec niego przemocą.

W dniu 7 kwietnia 2014 r. p. Aron Atabek został przeniesiony do kolonii karnej AP-162/1 w mieście Pawłodar w Kazachstanie, a jego żona otrzymała zawiadomienie w sprawie tego przeniesienia.

UE wyraziła obawy dotyczące sprawy p. Atabeka w kontekście posiedzeń w ramach dialogu UE-Kazachstan dotyczącego praw człowieka. UE śledzi i nadal będzie bardzo uważnie śledzić rozwój wydarzeń w tej sprawie i będzie zachęcać władze Kazachstanu do zapewnienia przestrzegania prawa p. Atabeka do rzetelnego procesu i do rozpatrywania jego sprawy zgodnie z przyjętymi przez Kazachstan międzynarodowymi zobowiązaniami i obowiązkami.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003103/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Kazakhstan: the case of Aron Atabek

In 2006, the Kazakh poet, journalist and opposition activist Aron Atabek was sentenced to 16 years in prison on trumped-up charges. The authorities accused him of orchestrating a protest by people whose houses had been slated for demolition. Action to protect the houses led to clashes with the police in which one police officer died. Aron Atabek — along with three other people — was named as one of the organisers of the demonstration and found guilty of the officer's death. The ruling was based on the testimonies of two witnesses who later withdrew their earlier testimonies in court, pointing out that they had been given under duress.

Is the High Representative aware of the situation as regards Aron Atabek and the other individuals falsely convicted of leading a protest to protect people's homes? Will the EU be taking steps to secure their release?

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

The EEAS closely follows human rights situation in Kazakhstan, in particular a number of individual cases of concern, including the case of Mr Aron Atabek.

In 2007, Mr Aron Atabek was convicted on charges of organising mass disorder and sentenced to 18 years in a maximum security prison. No evidence linking him explicitly to the death of the police officer to violence was presented in court.

Mr Aron Atabek was transferred on 7 April 2014 to a prison colony AP-162/1 in the city of Pavlovar in Kazakhstan and his wife was given notification concerning this transfer

The EU has raised concerns about the case of Mr Atabek in the context of the EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue meetings. The EU is and will continue to follow the developments in this case very closely and to encourage the Kazakh authorities to ensure that Mr Aron's right to a fair trial has been respected, and that his treatment is in line with Kazakhstan's international commitments and obligations.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003105/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Prawa człowieka w Meksyku

Jak donosi Human Right Watch, siły bezpieczeństwa Meksyku dopuszczają się szeroko pojętych naruszeń praw człowieka w walce z przestępczością zorganizowaną. Dochodzi m.in. do porwań, zabójstw oraz tortur. Organizacja udokumentowała prawie 250 przypadków tego typu z okresu rządów byłego prezydenta Felipe Calderona (2006-2012). W przeważającej większości przypadków nie przeprowadzono rzetelnego dochodzenia, co przyczyniło się do pogłębienia stosowania przemocy oraz zwiększenia poczucia bezkarności organów bezpieczeństwa.

Jakie jest stanowisko Wysokiej Przedstawiciel wobec naruszeń praw człowieka w Meksyku? Jakie kroki może podjąć Unia Europejska, aby wpłynąć na poprawę standardów przestrzegania tych praw?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(10 czerwca 2014 r.)

UE i Meksyk łączy wspólne zobowiązane do ochrony praw człowieka w stosunkach dwustronnych i wielostronnych. Partnerstwo strategiczne z 2010 r. wpłynęło na dalsze poszerzenie zakresu współpracy poprzez wprowadzenie „pogłębionego dialogu na temat praw człowieka", który corocznie odbywa się na wysokim szczeblu (z udziałem SPUE ds. Praw Człowieka i meksykańskiego podsekretarza stanu).

System sądownictwa karnego, w tym kwestia bezkarności, stanowi jeden z priorytetów UE w dziedzinie praw człowieka w Meksyku. Bezpieczeństwo i prawa człowieka, bezkarność i walka z przestępczością zorganizowaną należały do tematów omawianych podczas dwóch ostatnich rund dialogu na temat praw człowieka (ostatnia z nich odbyła się w marcu 2014 r.).

UE stara się zwiększać świadomość na temat niektórych przypadków poprzez lokalne zabiegi dyplomatyczne i oświadczenia, wspiera też Meksyk za pomocą swojego przełomowego programu „Laboratorium spójności społecznej II" oraz innych projektów dotyczących reformy wymiaru sprawiedliwości w Meksyku.

Ponadto, zaplanowany jeszcze na 2014 r. dialog na wysokim szczeblu w sprawie bezpieczeństwa i sprawiedliwości będzie stanowić forum do dalszych dyskusji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003105/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights in Mexico

According to reports by Human Rights Watch, security forces in Mexico commit a wide range of human rights abuses in their fight against organised crime, including kidnapping, murder and torture. Human Rights Watch has documented nearly 250 incidents of this kind which took place under the regime of Felipe Calderón, who was president between 2006 and 2012. In the vast majority of cases no proper investigations were carried out, a situation which has increased the level of violence and heightened the sense of impunity felt by security agencies.

What is the High Representative's position on human rights abuses in Mexico? What measures can the EU take to improve the observance of these rights?

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

The EU and Mexico share a mutual commitment to the protection of human rights at bilateral and multilateral level. The 2010 Strategic Partnership has further enhanced the scope of cooperation by introducing the 'enhanced dialogue on human rights' that takes place on yearly basis at high level (EUSR for Human Rights and Mexican Under-Secretary of State).

The criminal justice system including impunity is one of the top human rights priorities for the EU in Mexico. Security and human rights, impunity and the fight against organised crime figured among the topics of the last two sessions of the Human Rights Dialogue (last one in March 2014).

In addition, the EU is trying to raise awareness about certain cases through local demarches and statements, and is supporting Mexico through its landmark 'Social Cohesion Laboratory II' programme and other cooperation projects in the field of justice reform in Mexico.

Finally, a High-Level Dialogue on Security and Justice, envisaged later in 2014, will provide a forum for discussion.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003106/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Rakiety Iskander-M w obwodzie kaliningradzkim

W ciągu ostatnich miesięcy miała miejsce rozbudowa systemu rakiet krótkiego zasięgu Iskander-M, przy granicy Federacji Rosyjskiej z Unią Europejską. Rosja umieściła kilkadziesiąt rakiet o zasięgu około pięciuset kilometrów w obwodzie kaliningradzkim przy granicy z Polską oraz krajami bałtyckimi. W zasięgu rakiet znajduje się całe terytorium Polski. Wladimir Putin poinformował, ze rozstawienie rakiet jest odpowiedzią na amerykańskie plany rozstawienia europejskiej tarczy antyrakietowej.

Zważywszy na *de facto* inwazję wojsk rosyjskich na Krymie, jakie jest stanowisko Wysokiej Przedstawiciel wobec rozstawienia przez Rosję rakiet przystosowanych do przenoszenia głowic atomowych wzdłuż granicy z UE? Czy Wysoka Przedstawiciel dostrzega w tym fakcie zagrożenie ze strony Federacji Rosyjskiej? Czy rozstawienie rakiet wpłynie na relację UE z Rosją?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(18 czerwca 2014 r.)

Kwestie dotyczące obrony przeciwrakietowej są rozpatrywane w kontekście NATO, w tym w Radzie NATO-Rosja. Stosunki UE z Rosją są obecnie kształtowane na rosyjskich działaniach na Ukrainie i w jej sąsiedztwie, w tym na bezprawnej aneksji Krymu i zwiększaniu obecności rosyjskiego wojska na wschodniej granicy ukraińskiej, a nie na rozmieszczeniu rakiet „Iskander" w obwodzie kaliningradzkim.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003106/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Iskander-M rockets in the Kaliningrad Oblast

In recent months the Iskander-M short-range missile system on the Russian-EU border has been reinforced. Russia has installed several dozen missiles with a range of around 500 km in the Kaliningrad Oblast near the border with Poland and the Baltic states. All of Poland is within the missiles' range. Vladimir Putin has said that the installation of the missiles is a response to US plans for a European missile defence shield.

In light of the *de facto* invasion of Crimea by Russian troops, what is the High Representative's position with regard to Russia installing missiles along the EU border that are capable of carrying nuclear warheads? Does the High Representative see this as a threat by Russia? Will the installation of these missiles have an impact on EU-Russia relations?

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

Issues relating to missile defence are dealt with in the NATO context including in the NATO-Russia Council. EU-Russia relations are at this juncture determined by Russian actions in and around Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of Crimea and the military build-up on the Eastern Ukrainian border, rather than the Iskander deployment in Kaliningrad.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003107/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Rosja: sprawa Michaiła Kosienki

W dniu 6 maja 2012 r., dzień przed zaprzysiężeniem prezydenta Rosji Władimira Putina, po demonstracji opozycji na placu Błotnym zatrzymano 450 opozycjonistów. Jednego z nich, Michaiła Kosienkę, skazano na przymusowe leczenie psychiatryczne. Istnieją poważne przesłanki świadczące o niesłuszności wyroku. Jak argumentuje adwokat skazanego, brakuje rzetelnych dowodów popełnienia zarzucanych Kosience czynów. Mężczyzna cierpiący na schizofrenię zaprzecza uczestnictwu w ataku na policjantów, co potwierdził w sądzie jeden z pobitych funkcjonariuszy. Obrońcy praw człowieka alarmują, iż mimo jawnego braku dowodów obciążających Michaiła Kosienkę był on przetrzymywany w więzieniu do czasu ogłoszenia wyroku, przez 14 miesięcy, został pozbawiony kontaktu z rodziną oraz nie wypuszczono go na pogrzeb matki. Siostrze skazanego pełniącej rolę jego przedstawicielki w sądzie nie zezwolono na ustalenie z nim linii obroni.

Jak Wysoka Przedstawiciel ustosunkuje się do jawnego pogwałcenia podstawowych praw człowieka wobec obywatela Federacji Rosyjskiej? Jakie stanowisko zajmuje UE wobec naruszania podstawowych praw i swobód w krajach partnerskich?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(26 maja 2014 r.)

Wysokiej Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji znana jest sprawa Michaiła Kosienki, która była wielokrotnie poruszana w rozmowach z rosyjskimi władzami. Przedstawiciel delegatury Unii w Moskwie był obecny na procesie Kosienki oraz niedawnej rozprawie apelacyjnej. W dniu 13 marca podczas pilnej debaty na temat praw człowieka w Rosji na posiedzeniu plenarnym Parlamentu Europejskiego UE powtórzyła swoje poważne obawy co do sytuacji Michaiła Kosienki. UE przywołała również swoje stanowisko w sprawie wyroku dla ośmiu oskarżonych w związku z wydarzeniami na Placu Błotnym, przedstawione w oświadczeniu publicznym wydanym w dniu 24 lutego.

Unia Europejska jest w dalszym ciągu zaniepokojona ograniczeniami wolności zrzeszania się i zgromadzeń w Rosji. W ciągu minionych tygodni rosyjskie władze zatrzymały setki uczestników pokojowych demonstracji w Moskwie, podczas protestów przeciwko rosyjskiej wojskowej interwencji na Krymie oraz podczas niewielkich demonstracji i innych spotkań mających na celu wsparcie protestujących uczestniczących w wydarzeniach na Placu Błotnym w Rosji w dniu 6 maja 2012 r. Unia Europejska wyraziła jasno i w niebudzący wątpliwości sposób swoje obawy odnośnie do tych działań podczas posiedzenia Stałej Rady OBWE w dniu 27 marca 2014 r.

UE będzie nadal poruszać wspomniane kwestie w kontaktach z Federacją Rosyjską na wszystkich szczeblach, w tym w kontekście dwustronnych konsultacji na temat praw człowieka, których kolejną turę przewidziano na koniec pierwszego półrocza 2014 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003107/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Russia: the case of Mikhail Kosenko

On 6 May 2012, the day before Vladimir Putin was sworn in as President of Russia, 450 opposition activists were detained following a demonstration on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square. One of the activists, Mikhail Kosenko, was sentenced to undergo forced psychiatric treatment. There are serious indications that the sentence was inappropriate. As Kosenko's lawyer argues, there is no reliable evidence to show that he carried out the crimes of which he is accused. Kosenko, a schizophrenic, denies having participated in an attack on police officers — a claim which was corroborated in court by one of the officers who was beaten up in the attack. Human rights defenders are alarmed that Mikhail Kosenko, in spite of the clear absence of evidence against him, was held on remand for 14 months until sentencing and was denied contact with his family. Additionally, he was not allowed to attend his mother's funeral. Kosenko's sister, who was acting as his representative in court, was not permitted to establish a line of defence with him.

What position does the High Representative take on this case in which the basic human rights of a Russian citizen have been clearly violated? What position does the EU take on the violation of basic rights and freedoms in our partner countries?

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

The HR/VP is well aware of the case of Mikhail Kosenko, which has been repeatedly raised with the Russian authorities. The EU Delegation in Moscow attended his trial and his recent appeal trial. On 13 March during a plenary urgency debate on human rights in Russia held in the European Parliament, the EU reiterated its serious concerns about the situation of Mr Kosenko. The EU also recalled its position on the verdict of 8 Bolotnaya indictees, as outlined in a public statement issued on 24 February.

More broadly, the European Union remains concerned about limitations on the freedom of assembly and association in Russia. Over the past weeks, Russian authorities have detained hundreds of peaceful protesters in Moscow, during protests against Russia's military intervention in Crimea and during small demonstrations and other gatherings to support the demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events in Russia on 6 May 2012. The European Union expressed in clear and unequivocal terms its concerns with those developments during the session of the OSCE Permanent Council held on 27 March 2014.

The EU will continue to raise these issues at all levels of its relationship with the Russian Federation, including in the context of the bilateral human rights consultations, the next round of which is planned for the end of the first Semester of 2014.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003109/14
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Transgraniczna opieka zdrowotna

Zgodnie z dyrektywą Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady 2011/24/UE z dnia 9 marca 2011 r. w sprawie stosowania praw pacjentów w transgranicznej opiece zdrowotnej, obywatele wszystkich państw członkowskich powinni mieć zagwarantowany równy dostęp do opieki medycznej od 25 października 2013 r. na terenie całej Unii Europejskiej. Niektóre państwa wspólnoty w początkowym okresie mogą mieć trudności ze stosowaniem w praktyce tego przepisu.

Szacuje się, że około 18 proc. Polaków może już niedługo skorzystać z możliwości wynikających z nowej dyrektywy, a Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia rozważa wprowadzenie dodatkowych procedur związanych z leczeniem transgranicznym w zakresie wysokospecjalistycznych procedur medycznych, mających na celu kontrolę nad jego środkami.

W jaki sposób Unia Europejska może pomóc państwom członkowskim w procesie wdrażania tej dyrektywy?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(14 maja 2014 r.)

Na podstawie dyrektywy 2011/24/UE w sprawie stosowania praw pacjentów w transgranicznej opiece zdrowotnej ([1]) pacjenci są uprawnieni do zwrotu kosztów leczenia, które uzyskali w innym państwie członkowskim, a do którego są uprawnieni na terytorium swojego państwa, do poziomu kosztów, które zostałyby pokryte w ich macierzystym państwie członkowskim. W przypadku niektórych rodzajów leczenia (leczenia wymagającego pobytu całodobowego lub wysoce specjalistycznej i kosztownej infrastruktury lub sprzętu) państwo członkowskie ubezpieczenia może również wymagać od pacjenta wystąpienia z wnioskiem o udzielenie uprzedniej zgody przed uzyskaniem leczenia w innym państwie członkowskim.

W trakcie procesu transpozycji Komisja przyjęła aktywne podejście do wdrażania dyrektywy, czego szczególnym wyrazem był program, w ramach którego składano w państwach członkowskich wizyty w celu omówienia przepisów dyrektywy. Celem tych wizyt było wsparcie działań organów krajowych zmierzających do transpozycji przepisów do prawa krajowego. Ponadto odbywały się regularne posiedzenia Komitetu ds. transgranicznej opieki zdrowotnej, w którego skład wchodzą przedstawiciele państw członkowskich, mające na celu omówienie wdrażania dyrektywy.

Komisja przeprowadza obecnie szczegółową ocenę, czy notyfikowane środki krajowe w pełni i prawidłowo transponują środki zawarte w dyrektywie. Jeżeli Komisja uzna, że oceniane środki nie stanowią prawidłowej transpozycji dyrektywy, skorzysta z procedur określonych w Traktacie o funkcjonowaniu Unii Europejskiej dotyczących braku transpozycji prawodawstwa UE.

([1]) Dz.U. L 88 z 4.4.2011, s. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003109/14
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Cross-border healthcare

Under Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, equal access to healthcare should be guaranteed to citizens of all Member States, throughout the EU, as of 25 October 2013. Initially, some countries may have difficulties in applying this provision in practice.

It is estimated that around 18% of Poles might soon take advantage of the opportunities resulting from the new directive, and, with a view to controlling its resources, Poland's National Health Fund is considering introducing additional procedures relating to cross-border healthcare in the area of highly specialised medical procedures.

How can the European Union help the Member States implement this directive?

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

Under the directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare ([1]) patients are entitled to be reimbursed for treatments they received in another Member State and to which they are entitled in their own territory and up to the level of costs that would have been assumed in their home Member State. For certain treatments (those involving an overnight stay or highly specialised and cost-intensive equipment or infrastructure) the Member State of affiliation may also require the patient to seek prior authorisation before receiving treatment in another Member State.

During the transposition time, the Commission took a pro-active approach to implementing the directive, in particular via a programme of visits to Member States to discuss provisions of the directive with a view to supporting national authorities with their transposition into national law. In addition, the Committee on Cross-border Healthcare, consisting of representatives of Member States, met regularly to discuss implementation of the directive.

The Commission is currently carrying out a detailed assessment of whether the notified national measures fully and adequately transpose the measures contained within the directive. If the Commission considers that measures do not adequately transpose the directive, it will have recourse to the procedures laid down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union with regard to failure to transpose EU legislation.

([1]) OJ L 88, 4.4.2011.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003110/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Wojna domowa w Republice Środkowoafrykańskiej

W grudniu 2012 r., członkowie muzułmańskiego ruchu Seleka doprowadzili do przewrotu politycznego w Republice Środkowoafrykańskiej, doprowadzając do obalenia dotychczasowej władzy rządu oraz prezydenta. Od tego czasu trwał proces eskalacji wojny religijnej pomiędzy muzułmanami związanymi z Seleką a chrześcijanami. Aktualna sytuacja w Republice Środkowoafrykańskiej jest dramatyczna. Wyłącznie w grudniu ub.r. zginęło ponad 450 osób, a 400 tys. osób opuściło swoje domy w obawie o życie. Sytuacja w Republice zaczyna przypominać ludobójstwo w Rwandzie w 1994 r.

Czy Wysoka Przedstawiciel jest świadoma dramatycznej wojny na tle religijnym w Republice Środkowoafrykańskiej? Czy UE wesprze siły rządu francuskiego oraz Unii Afrykańskiej w walce o przywrócenie spokoju pomiędzy walczącymi grupami?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(2 lipca 2014 r.)

W dniu 10 lutego Rada do Spraw Zagranicznych postanowiła utworzyć operację z zakresu WPBiO aby przyczynić się do działań stabilizacyjnych, zgodnie z wezwaniem Rady Europejskiej na posiedzeniu w dniach 19-20 grudnia 2013 r. Operacja EUFOR RCA stanowi integralną część kompleksowego podejścia, obejmującego działania polityczne, wojskowe, humanitarne i rozwojowe.

W celu przywrócenia bezpieczeństwa na całym terytorium Republiki Środkowoafrykańskiej, EUFOR będzie ściśle współpracować z siłami francuskimi Sangaris i siłami UA MISCA, których finansowanie wspiera UE. Unia jest zaangażowana w dalsze wspieranie misji MISCA (50 mln EUR).

EUFOR RCA ma zapewnić tymczasowe wsparcie w utrzymywaniu bezpieczeństwa w rejonie Bangi, w perspektywie późniejszego przekazania tego zadania operacji utrzymywania pokoju ONZ. Siły tej operacji przyczynią się więc zarówno do wsparcia międzynarodowych działań zmierzających do ochrony najbardziej narażonych grup ludności, jak i do stworzenia warunków umożliwiających niesienie pomocy humanitarnej. Siły EUFOR RCA działały będą w Bangi oraz w porcie lotniczym stolicy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003110/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Civil war in the Central African Republic

In December 2012, members of the Muslim Seleka movement overthrew the Government and President of the Central African Republic. Since then there has been an escalating religious war between Muslims linked to Seleka and Christians. The current situation in the country is alarming. In December 2013 alone, over 450 people died, and 400 000 had to flee their homes in fear of their lives. The situation is reminiscent of the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Is the High Representative aware of the religious war taking place in the Central African Republic? Will the EU provide support to the French and African Union troops fighting to restore peace between the warring factions?

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

On 10 February, the Foreign Affairs Council decided to establish a CSDP operation to contribute to stabilisation efforts, as requested by the European Council on 19-20 December 2013. The EUFOR RCA operation is an integral part of a comprehensive approach, encompassing political, military, humanitarian and development action.

To help restore security throughout the territory EUFOR will work in close cooperation with the French force Sangaris and the AU force MISCA, which the EU helps to fund.Indeed, the EU is committed to pursue its support to MISCA (EUR 50 million).

EUFOR RCA is to provide temporary support in achieving a safe and secure environment in the Bangui area, with a view to handing over to a UN peacekeeping operation or to African partners. The force will thereby contribute both to international efforts to protect the populations most at risk and to the creation of the conditions for providing humanitarian aid. EUFOR RCA will operate in Bangui and in the capital's airport.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003111/14
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zagrożenia wobec wspólnoty prawosławnej w Syrii

Od początku wybuchu wojny domowej w Syrii w 2011 r. zamieszkującą tam wspólnotę prawosławną spotykają ataki ze strony muzułmańskich rebeliantów. Zagrożone jest zarówno życie wspólnoty jak i chrześcijańskie dziedzictwo narodowe. Dochodzi m.in. do zamachów na prawosławne miejscowości, szkoły, klasztory, a także do porwań członków tej wspólnoty. Los niektórych spośród uprowadzonych pozostaje nieznany, jak w przypadku dwóch biskupów porwanych 22 kwietnia 2013 r. – metropolity Aleppo Pawla (Yazigi) z „greckiego" Prawosławnego Patriarchatu Antiochii i metropolity Aleppo Jana Ibrahima z syryjskiego Patriarchatu Antiochii. Towarzyszący im w chwili porwania diakon został przez napastników zastrzelony.

Pod koniec listopada 2013 r. członkowie radykalnego muzułmańskiego ugrupowania terrorystycznego Dżabhat An-Nusra po raz kolejny napadli prawosławną miejscowość Maaloula oraz wtargnęli do żeńskiego monasteru św. Tekli, w którym przebywały sieroty i mniejszość muzułmańska, nad którymi opiekę sprawowały prawosławne mniszki – trzynaście spośród nich porwano.

Czy Wysoka Przedstawiciel jest świadoma zagrożeń, jakie niosą dla wspólnoty prawosławnej w Syrii wewnątrzmuzułmańskie walki o kształt i przyszłość kraju? Co UE może uczynić, aby zapobiec dalszej eskalacji przemocy wobec chrześcijan? Jak UE może wesprzeć działanie na rzecz uwolnienia uprowadzonych członków prawosławnej wspólnoty w Syrii?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(25 czerwca 2014 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca jest w pełni świadoma sytuacji wspólnoty prawosławnej w Syrii, jak również innych mniejszości i grup szczególnie wrażliwych w tym kraju. Rada do Spraw Zagranicznych poruszała tę kwestię przy licznych okazjach, a w konkluzjach Rady z lutego i kwietnia 2014 r. zwróciła szczególną uwagę na trudną sytuację chrześcijan w Syrii. Ponadto UE kontynuowała prace zmierzające do zabezpieczenia losów i doprowadzenia do uwolnienia wszystkich uprowadzonych przywódców religijnych i innych działaczy pokojowych oraz dziennikarzy, ułatwiając im kontakty z odpowiednimi zainteresowanymi stronami w ramach dialogów politycznych i misji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003111/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Dangers facing the Orthodox Christian community in Syria

Since the civil war broke out in Syria in 2011, the country's native Orthodox Christian community has been facing attacks from Islamic rebels. Their community life and the nation's Christian heritage are also under threat. Attacks are occurring against Orthodox villages, schools and monasteries, and members of the community are also being kidnapped. The fate of some of those kidnapped remains uncertain. This is the case with two bishops kidnapped on 22 April 2013 — Metropolitan Paul Yazigi of Aleppo of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, and Metropolitan John Ibrahim of Aleppo of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. A deacon who was accompanying them was also shot dead by the attackers.

In late November 2013, members of the radical Islamist faction 'Jabhat al-Nusra' carried out yet another attack on the Orthodox village of Maaloula and broke into the convent of Saint Thecla, where Orthodox nuns were sheltering orphans and members of the Muslim minority. 13 nuns were kidnapped.

Is the High Representative aware of the dangers that the Syrian Orthodox community is facing due to the internal conflicts raging between Muslims over the shape of Syria's future? What can the EU do to prevent violence against Christians from escalating? How can the EU support efforts to secure the release of kidnapped members of the Orthodox community in Syria?

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

The HR/VP is acutely aware of the situation of the Syrian Orthodox community as well as other minority and vulnerable groups in Syria. The Foreign Affairs Council has raised the issue on many occasions and has paid particular attention to the plight of the Christians in Syria in two Council conclusions from February and April 2014. The EU has also continued to work towards ascertaining the fate and securing the release of all kidnapped religious leaders and other peaceful activists, as well as journalists in its contacts with appropriate stakeholders in political dialogues and missions.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003112/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07 OJEU 15.9.2007

With regard to the State Aid — Ireland Investigation C31/07, could the Commission confirm whether the information provided to it contradicts the information provided to the Irish High Court in the judicial review case Student Transport Scheme Limited v The Minister for Education and Skills with Bus Éireann as Notice Party, as set out in the judgment of the court?

Could the Commission confirm whether material information has been withheld from itself and/or the High Court?

Could the Commission confirm whether it will immediately disclose this material information to An Garda Siochana, the competent Irish authority for the investigation of suspected corruption, noting that under Irish law (Section 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2010), the definition of 'corruptly' includes 'acting with an improper purpose personally or by influencing another person, whether by means of making a false or misleading statement, by means of withholding, concealing, altering or destroying a document or other information, or by any other means'?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 April 2014)

The Commission cannot disclose any details of the information referred to, since it forms part of the on-going state aid investigation SA.20580 (C31/07) ([1]).

The Commission is not aware that this information contradicts information provided in the court case mentioned, or whether information has been withheld from any party.

The Commission would of course cooperate should it be contacted by any law enforcement authorities.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:217:0044:0066:EN:PDF

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003113/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(17 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Περιεχόμενο συζητήσεων για χωροταξία, πολεοδομία, περιβάλλον και υδάτινους πόρους

Κατά τη διάρκεια των διαπραγματεύσεων της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης με την τρόικα στην Αθήνα, έγινε γνωστό ότι, μεταξύ άλλων, συζητήθηκαν και θέματα χωροταξίας, πολεοδομίας, περιβάλλοντος, καθώς και θέματα που αφορούν στους υδάτινους πόρους.

Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να αναφέρει ποια είναι τα συγκεκριμένα θέματα που συζητήθηκαν για κάθε μία από αυτές τις κατηγορίες και τι τελικά συμφωνήθηκε;

Απάντηση του κ. Kallas εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Μαΐου 2014)

Στο πλαίσιο της τέταρτης αναθεώρησης του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα διεξάχθηκαν περαιτέρω συζητήσεις για τα μέτρα βελτίωσης της χρήσης γης με στόχο την οικονομική ανάπτυξη. Η ελληνική κυβέρνηση δεσμεύθηκε να θεσπίσει ταχέως νομοθεσία για τον καθορισμό των παράκτιων ζωνών, καθώς και νόμο περί χωροταξίας για να εξορθολογίσει την εθνική διαδικασία χωροταξικού σχεδιασμού. Οι στόχοι αυτού του δεύτερου νόμου συνίστανται στο να μειώσει τον αριθμό των ιεραρχικών σχεδίων που πρέπει να τεθούν σε εφαρμογή προκειμένου να υπάρξει ανάπτυξη, να διευκολύνει τις στρατηγικές επενδύσεις και τις ιδιωτικοποιήσεις και να αναθέσει εξουσίες σε τοπικό επίπεδο για να τροποποιηθούν τα υπάρχοντα σχέδια σύμφωνα με τις οικονομικές ανάγκες. Οι αρχές θα θεσπίσουν επίσης ένα νέο νόμο περί δασοκομίας για να αποσαφηνίσουν τον ορισμό των δασών και των δασικών γαιών και να εξορθολογίσουν τη δασική υπηρεσία. Επιπλέον, η κυβέρνηση σημείωσε πρόοδο όσον αφορά την πρόσκληση υποβολής προσφορών για έργα σχετικά με το κτηματολόγιο και τους δασικούς χάρτες για να εξασφαλισθεί η ολοκλήρωσή τους μέχρι το 2020. Πέραν τούτου, η ελληνική Κυβέρνηση δεσμεύθηκε να εγκρίνει μέχρι το φθινόπωρο του 2014 το παράγωγο δίκαιο που εκκρεμεί σχετικά με την περιβαλλοντική άδεια ([1]).

([1]) Για περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες, βλ. τμήμα 5.1.3 (σ. 199) της τέταρτης αναθεώρησης του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2014/pdf/ocp192_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003113/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Content of discussions on regional planning, town planning, the environment and water resources

It has emerged that the negotiations held between the Greek Government and the Troika in Athens addressed issues relating, *inter alia*, to regional planning, town planning, the environment and water resources.

Can the Commission say what specific issues were discussed in each of these areas and what was finally agreed?

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

In the context of the 4th review of the 2nd Economic adjustment programme for Greece there have been further discussions on measures to improve land use for economic development. The Government has committed to swiftly adopt legislation to define coastal zones, and a law for spatial planning to streamline the national planning process. The objectives of this latter law is to reduce the number of hierarchical plans that have to be in place for a development to occur, facilitate strategic investment and privatisation, and devolve powers to local levels to modify existing plans in line with economic needs. The authorities will also adopt a new forestry law to clarify the definition of forests and forest lands and streamline forestry administration. In addition, the Government has made progress in tendering projects for the cadastre and forestry maps in order to ensure their completion by 2020. Furthermore, the Government has committed to adopt by autumn 2014 pending secondary legislation on environmental licensing. ([1])

([1]) For more details see Section 5.1.3 (p 199) of the 4th review of the 2nd Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece available at: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2014/pdf/ocp192_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003114/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Έκθεση Προόδου της Τουρκίας — Δηλώσεις Επιτρόπου Φούλε

Κατά την πρόσφατη συζήτηση στην ολομέλεια του Κοινοβουλίου της Έκθεσης Προόδου της Τουρκίας για το 2013, στην καταληκτική παρέμβασή του, ο Επίτροπος Διεύρυνσης Στέφαν Φούλε ανάφερε μεταξύ άλλων τα εξής:

«Δεν υπάρχει άλλος τρόπος να λύσουμε συνολικά το κυπριακό ζήτημα, παρά μόνο με βάση τις ευρωπαϊκές αξίες και χαίρομαι που βλέπω ότι και με την τουρκική εμπλοκή μπορέσαμε να δούμε να σημειώνεται πρόοδος σ' αυτό το θέμα.»

Καλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει τα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

1. Για ποια πρόοδο μιλά ο κ. Επίτροπος, όταν ακόμα και εγώ, ως ευρωβουλευτής και μαζί μου άλλοι 200 000 βίαια εκτοπισθέντες Κύπριοι ευρωπαίοι πολίτες, στερούμαστε του δικαιώματος επιστροφής στα σπίτια και τις περιουσίες μας από την κατοχική Τουρκία;

2. Από πότε οι ευρωπαϊκές αρχές επιτρέπουν τη στρατιωτική εισβολή και κατοχή από μια υποψήφια για ένταξη χώρα σε βάρος ενός κράτους μέλους της ΕΕ;

3. Γιατί, ενώ η ΕΕ καταδικάζει την επέμβαση στην Κριμαία και επιβάλλει κυρώσεις στη Ρωσία, δεν πράττει το ίδιο και με την κατοχική Τουρκία; Μήπως υπάρχουν δύο μέτρα και δύο σταθμά ή μήπως οι ευρωπαϊκές αρχές ερμηνεύονται κατά το δοκούν;

4. Μήπως ως ΕΕ είμαστε τελικά τόσο αφελείς ώστε να πιστεύουμε ότι η επιβράβευση της Τουρκίας με το άνοιγμα νέων διαπραγματευτικών κεφαλαίων θα συμβάλει σε λύση του Κυπριακού με βάση τις ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και αξίες; Δεν έχουμε διδαχθεί ακόμα από τα λάθη μας και δεν έχουμε αντιληφθεί πώς συμπεριφέρεται η Τουρκία;

5. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή ώστε να ισχύσουν πράγματι οι ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και αξίες στη λύση του Κυπριακού;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(3 Ιουνίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή έχει πολλές φορές εκφράσει την ικανοποίησή της για την επανέναρξη των συνομιλιών, καθώς και για τον εποικοδομητικό ρόλο που διαδραμάτισε η Τουρκία στην επανεκκίνηση της διαδικασίας. Στις 11 Φεβρουαρίου 2014, ο Πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και ο Πρόεδρος του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου, εξέδωσαν κοινή δήλωση με την οποία χαιρέτιζαν την κοινή διακήρυξη των Κυπρίων και Τουρκοκυπρίων ηγετών, η οποία έθετε σε στέρεη βάση την επανέναρξη των διαπραγματεύσεων.

Η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει ότι η θέση της ΕΕ είναι επίσης σαφής και έχει επανειλημμένα αποτυπωθεί σε αντίστοιχα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου. Η ΕΕ αναμένει από την Τουρκία να υποστηρίξει ενεργά τις διεξαγόμενες διαπραγματεύσεις που αποβλέπουν σε μια δίκαιη, συνολική και βιώσιμη διευθέτηση του Κυπριακού ζητήματος στο πλαίσιο του Οργανισμού Ηνωμένων Εθνών, σύμφωνα με τις σχετικές αποφάσεις του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας του ΟΗΕ και τις θεμελιώδεις αρχές που διέπουν την Ένωση. Η ΕΕ έχει κατ' επανάληψη καλέσει την Τουρκία να δεσμευθεί υπό συγκεκριμένους όρους για τη συνολική αυτή διευθέτηση.

Οι σχέσεις της ΕΕ με την Τουρκία βασίζονται στη συμφωνία σύνδεσης, την τελωνειακή ένωση και το διαπραγματευτικό πλαίσιο που διέπει τη διαδικασία ένταξης της χώρας. Το Συμβούλιο σημείωσε στα συμπεράσματά του της 17ης Δεκεμβρίου 2013 ότι η Τουρκία είναι υποψήφια προς ένταξη χώρα και σημαντικός εταίρος της ΕΕ με δυναμική οικονομία που συμβάλλει σημαντικά στην ευημερία ολόκληρης της ευρωπαϊκής ηπείρου. Οι εντατικές και αξιόπιστες διαπραγματεύσεις προσχώρησης, τηρουμένων των δεσμεύσεων έναντι της ΕΕ και των συμφωνημένων προϋποθέσεων, μαζί με τις υπόλοιπες πτυχές της σχέσης ΕΕ-Τουρκίας που θίγονται στα εν λόγω συμπεράσματα, θα επιτρέψουν να αξιοποιηθούν πλήρως οι δυνατότητες της σχέσης ΕΕ-Τουρκίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003114/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Progress Report on Turkey — Statements by Commissioner Füle

During the recent plenary debate in Parliament on the progress report on Turkey for 2013, the Commissioner for Enlargement, Štefan Füle, concluded by stating, *inter alia*: 'there is no other way to find a comprehensive settlement to Cyprus issue than along the principles the EU is based on. I am happy to see that also with Turkey's involvement we have been able to see the progress there.'

In view of the above, will the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What progress is the Commissioner referring to, given that I, an MEP, together with two hundred thousand other Cypriots and European citizens who have been violently displaced, have been deprived of the right to return to our homes and property by the Turkish occupying forces?

2. Since when do the EU authorities countenance the military invasion and occupation of an EU Member State by a candidate country?

3. The EU has condemned the intervention in the Crimea and imposed sanctions on Russia. Why does it not treat Turkey — which has occupied part of Cyprus — in the same way? Is this a case of double standards or are EU principles being interpreted arbitrarily?

4. Are we, the EU, so naive as to think that rewarding Turkey by opening new negotiating chapters will contribute to a solution of the Cyprus problem based on European principles and values? Have we not yet learned from our mistakes and have we not yet grasped how Turkey behaves?

5. What will it do to ensure that European principles and values apply in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem?

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

The Commission has welcomed the resumption of talks on a number of occasions, as well as the constructive role Turkey has played in the resumption of the process. On 11 February 2014, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council issued a joint statement welcoming the Joint Declaration of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, which laid down a solid foundation for resumption of negotiations.

The Commission recalls that the EU position is also clear and has consistently been reflected in respective Council conclusions. The EU expects Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. The EU has repeatedly called on Turkey to commit in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement.

EU relations with Turkey are based on the Association Agreement, the Customs Union and on the Negotiating Framework governing the country's accession process. The Council noted in its 17 December 2013 conclusions that Turkey is a candidate country and a key partner for the EU with a dynamic economy that provides a valuable contribution to the prosperity of the whole European continent. Active and credible accession negotiations which respect the EU's commitments and established conditionality, along with all the other dimensions of the EU-Turkey relationship addressed in these conclusions, will enable the EU-Turkey relationship to achieve its full potential.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003115/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Obligation to report corruption

Can the Commission state the Commission's obligations and procedures with respect to suspected corruption, or where information is given regarding suspected corruption and the Commission is in possession of information that, if disclosed to the proper authorities for investigation of suspected corruption, could lead to the prosecution of individual officials in Member States for corruption?

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

When suspected corruption affects EU funds or concerns members and staff of the EU institutions and bodies, the Commission forwards this information to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) which assesses whether or not to open an investigation.

OLAF's role and remit for carrying out its administrative investigations are defined mainly in Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 ([1]). The Guidelines on Investigation Procedures for OLAF staff contain the internal rules which are applied in OLAF investigations ([2]).

In line with Article 11 of Regulation 883/2013, upon completion of an investigation OLAF draws up a report, which is accompanied by recommendations on whether or not actions shall be taken. Those recommendations indicate, where appropriate, any disciplinary, judicial or other actions to be taken by the competent authorities. Where the report reveals the existence of facts which could give rise to criminal proceedings, that information is forwarded to the judicial authorities of the Member State concerned. Similarly, where OLAF decides not to open an investigation because the suspected corruption does not affect EU funds nor concern a member or staff of the EU institutions and bodies, OLAF forwards the information to the relevant national authorities.

([1]) OJ L248, p. 1.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/documents/gip/gip_18092013_en.pdf#page=1

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003116/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Obligation to report corruption by persons working at the Commission

Can the Commission state the personal legal obligation of individuals working at the Commission to expose suspected corruption by officials in Member States?

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

All EU staff must be loyal to the European Union and assist and tender advice to their superiors.

When they become aware of facts which give rise to a presumption of the existence of possible illegal activity, including fraud or corruption, detrimental to the Union's interests, they shall without delay inform either their immediate superior, their Director-General or, if they consider it useful, the Secretary-General, or the persons in equivalent positions, or the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) direct.

Articles 11 ff. of the Staff Regulations and notably Articles 22(a), 22(b) and 22(c) of the Staff Regulations complemented by Commission Communication SEC(2012) 679 provide the framework for this process.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003118/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Corruption in the provision of school transport services in Ireland

Could the Commission confirm that it will assist the Irish police service (An Garda Síochána) or private individuals if requested to do so in relation to any investigation into corruption in relation to the school transport contract in Ireland?

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

As mentioned in reply to previous Written Question P-003112/2014, the Commission would of course cooperate on this or any matter should it be contacted by any law enforcement authorities.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003119/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Withholding of information by the Irish Authorities regarding state aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation — Disclosure of information on corruption

Could the Commission confirm that, if the Irish authorities withheld from their submissions to the Commission that the Department of Education and Skills acquired the services of Bus Éireann and made payments to it for maintenance of buses and that they had no mechanism in place to make certain that the sums paid were at market price and at competitive rates, this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003120/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding subcontractors in Bus Eireann: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Is it the Commission's understanding that all the subcontractors working for Bus Eireann were hired in accordance with EU procurement directives? If so, how did it come to this understanding?

Question for written answer E-003121/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding the provision of school transport services in Ireland: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Is it the Commission's understanding that the school transport contract currently being operated by Bus Eireann on behalf of the Department of Education was put out to public tender? If so, when was this tender published?

Question for written answer E-003122/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it is its understanding that the School Transport Scheme in Ireland is 'operated under contract' between the Department of Education and Bus Eireann, and that it understands this because the Irish Authorities informed it thereof?

Question for written answer E-003123/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Is it the Commission's understanding that Bus Eireann could make a reasonable profit from the School Transport Scheme contract with the Department of Education? If so, how did it come to this understanding?

Question for written answer E-003124/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that a separate investigation is being undertaken by its services dealing with procurement matters into the illegal direct award of a school transport contract in Ireland, and also state whether the Irish authorities have been notified?

Question for written answer E-003125/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it will request that the Irish Department of Transport release all documents supplied by it to the Commission in relation to the 2007 investigation into Bus Éireann for state aid infringements?

Question for written answer E-003126/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it has received from the Irish authorities the Farrell Grants Sparks (FGS) report entitled 'Review of the overhead costs and indirect costs for the administration of the school transport scheme' (October 2009), on the subject of school transport charges and commissioned by the Irish Department of Education and Skills in 2007, in the context of its ongoing investigation into school transport contracts in Ireland?

Question for written answer E-003127/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it was told by the Irish authorities in 1975 that Bus Éireann did not make any profit from the school transport scheme and that it has not made any profit since that time?

Question for written answer E-003128/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Bus Éireann as a contractor in relation to: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it considers Bus Éireann to be a contractor for the purposes of the EU directives on procurement in relation to the school transport scheme in Ireland?

Question for written answer E-003129/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission confirm that it never received a response from the Irish authorities when it asked them why the contract for the school transport services was not put out to public tender?

Question for written answer E-003130/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it understands that it is illegal in Ireland to mislead or withhold information from the courts, and also confirm that if it has any information or documents that may indicate that the Irish courts were misled or that information was withheld in regard to the abovementioned case, it will make those documents and/or that information available to the Garda Síochána, as the relevant authority in Ireland as regards investigating such illegal activity?

Question for written answer E-003131/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Can the Commission confirm that it would be inconsistent with their understanding of the operation of the school transport scheme to claim that Bus Eireann relies on school transport income to stay in business in the same way as a stool with three legs would fall over if one of its legs were removed?

Question for written answer E-003132/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities submitted information to the Commission that the school transport services acquired by the Department of Education and Skills from Bus Éireann were 'operated under contract', this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003133/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities submitted information to the Commission that the school transport services acquired by the Department of Education and Skills from Bus Éireann were operated on a 'cost recovery basis', this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003134/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities submitted information to the Commission that the school transport services acquired by the Department of Education and Skills from Bus Éireann were operated on a 'cost recovery basis', and gave the Commission the impression that the company auditors independently verified that the amount of charges did not exceed the amount that the provision of the service cost Bus Éireann, this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003135/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities submitted information to the Commission that the school transport services acquired by the Department of Education and Skills from Bus Éireann were operated on a 'cost recovery basis', and withheld the information that the Department of Education and Skills did not have any statement from the auditors that Bus Éireann did not make a profit, this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003136/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish Authorities submitted to the Commission a justification for not putting out to tender the school transport services acquired by the Department of Education and Skills from Bus Éireann that relied upon the fact that those services were 'operated under contract', this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, who are the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003137/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities withheld from their submissions to the Commission that the Department of Education and Skills and/or Bus Éireann made direct awards of contracts to private bus operators without a public procurement process between 1 July 1993, when Ireland ratified Directive 92/50/EEC, and the time said submissions were made, this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003138/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that if the Irish authorities withheld from their submissions to the Commission that the Department of Education and Skills and/or Bus Éireann made direct awards of contracts for the acquisition of bus maintenance services without a public procurement process between 1 July 1993, when Ireland ratified Directive 92/50/EEC, and the time said submissions were made, this information would immediately be reported to the Garda Siochana, the Irish authorities responsible for investigating suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003139/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it would be inconsistent with its understanding of the operation of school transport if it were now told that the scheme was not operated under contract?

Question for written answer E-003140/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(17 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland C31/07 investigation

Could the Commission confirm that it would be inconsistent with its understanding of the operation of the school transport scheme if it were now told that no profit was made from school transport?

Question for written answer E-003143/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption regarding procurement and State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission confirm that it considers the Department of Education and Skills to be a contracting authority for the purposes of the EU Directives on procurement?

Question for written answer E-003144/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission confirm that it would be inconsistent with its understanding of the operation of the school transport scheme to claim that funds received before 2008 from the Department of Education for the provision of school transport were used to finance the commercial expressway services?

Question for written answer E-003145/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of information on corruption: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission explain what action it takes when it identifies an illegal direct award of a public contract?

Question for written answer E-003155/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission confirm what it believes to be reasonable profit in relation to the award of a public contract to a state-owned contractor and how this figure is calculated?

Question for written answer E-003156/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Is it the Commission's understanding that the High Court in Ireland was told and believed that the school transport scheme was not operated under contract and was awarded directly by the Department to Bus Eireann?

Question for written answer E-003157/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid — Ireland Investigation C 31/07

Could the Commission confirm that it has not received a notification from the Department of Education and Skills in the last seven years for state aid approval in relation to its justification for the level of payments it makes to Bus Eireann for the school transport contract?

Question for written answer E-003158/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State aid and Bus Eireann

Could the Commission confirm that it has not, in the last 7 years, received notification from the Department of Social Protection for state aid approval in relation to its justification for the level of payments it makes to Bus Eireann for the Free Travel Scheme?

Question for written answer E-003159/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid and Bus Éireann

Could the Commission confirm whether or not that just because a free travel scheme was in place prior to Ireland joining the European Economic Community that it constitutes 'existing' aid under Articles 17-19 of Regulation (EC) No 659/1999?

Question for written answer E-003160/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State aid and Bus Eireann

Could the Commission confirm that it would be inconsistent with its understanding of the operation of the school transport scheme if it was now told that the Department of Education have not audited the services carried out and the amounts of payments made to Bus Eireann in relation to services provided to it by Bus Eireann for school transport?

Question for written answer E-003394/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Information regarding suspected corruption

Can the Commission state its policy and procedure with regard to Ireland, where a private prosecution can be initiated using the complaint system of the Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act, 1851, and would the Commission give information to an individual that is contained in the submission of Ireland in the State Aid — Ireland 31/07 investigation that would confirm the content of the submission, such as whether or not the Irish authorities stated that school transport services are 'operated under contract' or 'on a cost recovery basis', or gave the justification for not putting the contract out to tender if it appears that the reasons were not consistent with the justification given to the Irish High Court, so that the private prosecutor may decide whether or not to initiate a complaint against officials of Member States with respect to information regarding suspected corruption?

Question for written answer E-003949/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(31 March 2014)

Subject: State aid

Can the Commission confirm that the payment of approximately EUR 60 million a year to the three CIE subsidiaries is an 'advantage' under the state aid rules?

Joint answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 2014)

All of the questions above refer to issues covered by the on-going state aid investigation C31/2007 (ex NN 17/07) — 'State aid to Córas Iompair Éireann Bus Companies (Dublin Bus and Irish Bus)' (SA.20580) ([1]).

As mentioned in replies to previous questions, (e.g. P-003112/2014, and E-010841/2013), as this is still an on-going investigation, the Commission cannot divulge any information relating to issues covered by the investigation to third parties nor it can anticipate its assessment of specific legal issues before the completion of the state aid investigation and the adoption of a final decision.

([1]) OJ C 217, 15.9.2007, p. 54.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-003141/14
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Očitovanje Komisije o inicijativi „Right to water”

„Right to water” prva je uspješna građanska inicijativa pokrenuta kako bi se spriječilo da se voda i odvodnja organiziraju u tržišnim uvjetima, kao i ostale usluge. Podaci ukazuju da danas u EU-u oko dva milijuna ljudi živi bez odgovarajuće vodoopskrbe i odvoda, što je zasigurno jedan od glavnih razloga pokretanja ove inicijative. Osim toga, inicijativa se zalaže i da vodoopskrba i upravljanje vodnim resursima ne mogu postati predmetom pravila unutarnjeg tržišta, te da se pružanje usluga opskrbe i sanitacije izuzme iz liberalizacije.

Cilj inicijative je nova uredba EU-a koja bi osigurala da institucije EU-a i države članice budu obvezne svim stanovnicima osigurati opskrbu dostatnim količinama pitke vode i primjerenu sanitaciju i odvodnju te da opskrba vodom i upravljanje vodnim resursima ne budu podvrgnuti pravilima zajedničkog tržišta, kao i da se onemogući liberalizacija vodnih usluga.

Prošli mjesec je i u Europskom parlamentu održano javno saslušanje na temu Europske građanske inicijative o pravu na vodu prilikom kojeg su mnogi zastupnici izrazili podršku toj inicijativi.

S obzirom na to da je inicijativa zadovoljila zakonodavne preduvjete o količini potpisa građana kao i o broju potpisa iz različitih zemalja prikupljenih u za to predviđenom zakonodavnom roku, Komisija je obvezna očitovati se o daljnjem postupanju.

Planira li Komisija pripremu prijedloga novog zakonskog paketa na razini EU-a kojim bi se implementiralo pravo na vodu i odvodnju, promičući istovremeno opskrbu vodom i osiguravanje odvodnje kao temeljne javne usluge, koji je svojim potpisom podržalo čak 1 884 790 građanki i građana Europske unije?

Odgovor g. Šefčoviča u ime Komisije
(24. travnja 2014.)

Dana 19. ožujka 2014. Europska komisija donijela je komunikaciju kojom utvrđuje svoj odgovor na građansku inicijativu „Voda i odvodnja su ljudsko pravo! Voda je javno dobro, a ne roba!” ([1]). Komunikacija je dostupna na sljedećoj adresi: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/finalised/answered

U Komunikaciji se daju odgovori na brojna pitanja postavljena tijekom javne rasprave koju je organizirao Europski parlament 17. veljače 2014. Komisija stoga poštovanog zastupnika poziva da obrati pažnju na informacije i odgovore u navedenoj Komunikaciji.

([1]) COM (2014)177.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003141/14
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: The Commission's response to the 'Right2Water' initiative

'Right2Water' is the first successful citizens' initiative that was launched to prevent water and sanitation from being managed under market conditions, as is the case with other services. Statistics show that some two million people in the EU are currently living without adequate water supplies and sanitation, and this was undoubtedly one of the main reasons for launching this initiative. The initiative also calls for water supply and water resource management not to be made subject to the rules of the internal market, and for water supply and sanitation services not to be liberalised.

The aim of the initiative is to bring about a new EU regulation that would oblige the EU institutions and the Member States to guarantee adequate amounts of drinking water and appropriate sanitation to all residents, and to ensure that water supply and water resource management are not subject to the rules of the single market, in order to prevent the liberalisation of water services.

Last month, a public hearing was held in the European Parliament on the subject of the European citizens' initiative on the right to water. During this hearing, many MEPs expressed their support for the initiative.

Given that the initiative has fulfilled the legal requirements as regards the number of citizens' signatures and the number of signatures gathered from different Member States within the legally prescribed period, the Commission is obliged to provide a response detailing how it intends to act on the matter.

Does the Commission plan to draft a new legal package at EU level in order to implement the right to water and sanitation, while promoting the concept that water supply and the assurance of sanitation are basic public services? I would like to stress that as many as 1 884 790 EU citizens have given their signatures to this initiative.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(24 April 2014)

On 19 March 2014, the European Commission adopted a communication setting out its response to the citizens' initiative 'Water and Sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good not a commodity!' ([1]). The communication is available at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/finalised/answered

The communication addresses many of the issues which were raised during the public hearing organised by the European Parliament on 17 February 2014. The Commission therefore invites the honourable Member to refer to the information and answers provided in the abovementioned Communication.

([1]) COM(2014) 177.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003142/14
to the Commission
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: 'Blood Minerals' from North Korea

A recent UN Commission of Inquiry into human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, published on 7 February 2014, made a number of very worrying observations regarding human rights abuses and the use of political prisoners for hazardous slave labour in North Korean mines. It is noted for example in paragraphs 775 and 776 of the report's detailed findings that the production facilities in political prison camps 'are administered to generate a maximum of economic output at minimal cost, without proper regard for the well-being and survival of the inmates. All inmates are subjected to forced labour […] The assignments most feared by inmates are in the mines and logging sites that are located on the premises of some of the camps. There, inmates have to toil with only basic tools in particularly dangerous conditions. Deadly work accidents frequently occur as a result of a combination of the prisoners' dire physical condition and the lack of safety measures'. Paragraph 1033 of the report subsequently concludes that the North Korean authorities are committing crimes against humanity in these political prison camps.

In light of these very serious allegations, what action is the Commission taking to address them?

Would the Commission consider a prohibition of the import of North Korean natural mineral resources into the EU in order to alleviate the suffering of political prisoners?

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

The EU is very concerned by the continuing and systematic violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). These concerns are raised at every occasion with the authorities of the DPRK. The EU also consistently raises the issue of human rights abuses in the DPRK bilaterally with its partners in the region as well as multilaterally, especially in the United Nations. In fact, the EU co-initiated the UN Human Rights Council resolution that, in March 2013, established the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK, to the report of which the Honourable Member has referred. The EU will work with all its partners, and especially the UN, to ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission of Inquiry's findings and recommendations.

The EU has put in place a regime of restrictive measures with respect to the DPRK that implements the sanctions imposed by the UN in response to the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes and includes additional autonomous restrictive measures reinforcing the measures imposed by the UN. In February 2013, the EU imposed a ban on trade in gold, precious metals and diamonds with the government of the DPRK, its public bodies and the Central Bank of the DPRK, or persons and entities acting on their behalf or at their direction. Mineral imports from the DPRK into the EU do not benefit from privileges granted to imported goods from developing countries under the EU's General System of Preferences (GSP).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003146/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that under the directive 2004/18 EU, if a contracting authority pays for services on a cost recovery basis, this constitutes a pecuniary interest?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2014)

The Commission confirms that if a contracting authority pays for services on a cost recovery basis, this constitutes a 'pecuniary interest' under Directive 2004/18/EC on public works contracts.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003147/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that under the Directive 2004/18 EU, if a company is in receipt of pecuniary interest from a contracting authority, the Correos case does not apply in so far as the arrangements between the contracting authority cannot contain any terms that might normally be associated with a commercial contract?

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

According to the case-law referred to by the Honourable Member, a cooperation agreement between a contracting authority and another legal entity cannot be considered as a public contract subject to Directive 2004/18/EC, if the legal entity in question acts, under the relevant provisions of national law, as an instrument or technical service to the contracting authority, is obliged to carry out orders given to it by the contracting authority and has no influence on the remuneration for its performance (judgments of 18.12.2007 in Case C-220/06, Correos, and of 19.4.2007 in Case C-295/05, Asemfo).

In the view of the Commission, the mere fact that the legal entity receives pecuniary interest from the contracting authority in question, does not necessarily exclude the application of the abovementioned case-law. It has to be verified in the light of the circumstances of each individual case whether the relationship is of a contractual nature or constitutes rather a purely administrative measure that creates only obligations for the legal entity and departs therefore significantly from the normal conditions of a commercial contract. Only in the latter case can be concluded that the contract is not subject to Directive 2004/18/EC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003148/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General Public Procurement issues — Directive 2004/18/EC

Could the Commission confirm that a Member State may not claim that the acquisition of school transport services does not fall within one of the categories listed in Annex II B to the directive?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2014)

Without specific details about the exact nature of school transport services in the case brought to its attention by the Honourable Member, the Commission is not in a position to answer precisely.

However, the Commission can confirm that school transport services by bus fall within Category c of Annex II A to the directive, 'Land transport services ([1]), including armoured car services, and courier services, except transport of mail'.

([1]) Directive 2004/18/EC: except for rail transport services covered by Category C of CPC prov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003149/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that a Member State may not claim that the acquisition of school transport services by a contracting authority from a company does not fall within the scope of the directive because it did not enter into a contract concluded in writing?

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

Public Procurement Contracts are defined as 'contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing …'. An oral contract might hence fall outside the scope of the directives on Public Procurement. However, the choice of an oral contract rather than a written contract which would otherwise have been subject to the directives could, depending on the specific circumstances, be contrary to the principle of 'sincere cooperation' enshrined in Article 4(3) of the Treaty on European Union.

As no special rules apply to the procurement of school bus transport services, any contract concluded in writing (or which should have been so concluded) would have to be awarded in conformity with the provisions of Directive 2004/18/EC, always assuming that:

1. it is awarded by a contracting authority (and not, for instance a purely private school which is neither supervised nor financed for more than half by the public sector);

2. its estimated value, net of VAT, is above the relevant threshold, currently EUR 134 000 or EUR 207 000, depending on the central or sub-central nature of the contracting authority concerned and

3. it is not covered by any of the exceptions provided for in the directive.

Where these assumptions are met, the full set of rules of the directive will apply, given that the Commission can confirm that school transport services by bus fall within Category c of Annex II A to the directive, 'Land transport services ([1]), including armoured car services, and courier services, except transport of mail'.

([1]) Directive 2004/18/EC: except for rail transport services covered by Category C of CPC prov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003150/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that the acquisition of services, within Schedule II B of the directive, for a pecuniary interest within the thresholds by a contracting authority from a company, does not fall outside the scope of the directive simply because it did not enter into a contract concluded in writing?

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

Concerning the effects of choosing to conclude a public procurement contract orally rather than in writing, t he Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-003149/2014.

The form of the contract (written or oral) is not relevant when determining whether the contract concerns services falling within Annex II A to Directive 2004/18/EC, such as is the case for school transport services by bus, or within part II B (e. g. school transport services by railway or underground).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003151/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that under Directive 2004/18 EU, when a contracting authority claims the Teckal exemption applies in respect of services acquired from a company, one of the cumulative requirements is that the contracting authority must own a share in the company?

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

According to the case-law developed by the Court of Justice under Directive 2004/18/EC, a contracting authority may award a public contract without a competitive procedure if it exercises over the contractor 'a control which is similar to that which it exercises its own departments', provided that the contractor does the essential part of its business with the controlling authority or authorities (the so-called 'in-house' or 'Teckal' exception).

It is for the national law to provide the legal instruments and structures to be used for the exercise of the control. In the view of the Commission, the 'Teckal' exception does therefore not require the use of a specific means of control, such as share ownership. The central issue is rather whether the contracting authority can actually exercise a decisive influence over both strategic objectives and significant decisions of the controlled legal person.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003152/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that under Directive 2004/18 EU, if a contracting authority claims that a certain scenario of facts allows for the Teckal exemption to apply in respect of services acquired from a company, it cannot claim that the same scenario of facts allows for the Hamburg exemption to apply at the same time?

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

The Commission considers that the two exemptions identified by the CJEU and referred to by the Honourable Member have different scopes of application. The situation referred to by CJEU in its judgment in the Case C-480/06 *Commission v Germany* (Hamburg) refers to cooperation between 2 contracting authorities. By contrast, the 'in-house' situation implies the award of a contract by a contracting authority to a separate legal entity, whereas one of these entities lacks any decisional independence with regard to the other. The latter situation may not be qualified as cooperation, as cooperation pre-supposes a certain degree of mutual autonomy of the parties to it.

On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that both exemptions might be applicable to the relations of the same entity, with regard to the same task, but with different public authorities. This would, for instance, be the case of a company providing services, on behalf of a public authority controlling it, to another public authority, in the context of cooperation between those authorities.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003153/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: General public procurement issues — Directive 2004/18 EU

Could the Commission confirm that for the Teckal, Hamburg and Article 106 (2) exemptions to apply, there can be no commercial element in the arrangement?

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

Cooperation between the contracting authorities, as referred to in the judgment of CJEU in the Case C-480/06 Commission v Germany (Hamburg), Article 12, paragraph 4, of Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC and Article 17, paragraph 4, of Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concessions contracts must be governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest. In addition, the implementation of the cooperation, including any financial transfers between the participating contracting authorities, should be governed solely by considerations relating to the public interests.

Although the ‘in-house’ exemption is governed by different legal conditions mentioned in Article 12, paragraph 1, of Directive 2014/24/EU and Article 17, paragraph 1, of Directive 2014/23/EU, the aim of these conditions is to ensure the public interest orientation of the ‘in-house’ exemption.

For state aid to be compatible with the internal market under Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the aid beneficiary must have been entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest. Generally speaking, that implies that the undertaking in question must have been entrusted with the provision of services which, if it were considering its own commercial interest, it would not assume or would not assume to the same extent or under the same conditions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003154/14
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: State Aid

Could the Commission confirm that the granting of state aid must be based on clearly defined obligations set out in a contract or that in the absence of a contract, the service is provided under the relevant legislative procedure?

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

There is no general requirement under the state aid rules for aid to be based on obligations set out in a contract or through a legislative procedure. However, in so far as the question relates to the compensation granted in relation to services of general economic interest ('SGEI'), it is correct that 'SGEI Communication ([1])', the 'SGEI Decision ([2])' and the 'SGEI Framework ([3])' require that any SGEI is entrusted to one or more undertakings by way of one or more acts, which must specify, among other things, the content and duration of the public service obligations concerned. Such entrustment acts may take any form such as a contract, a regulatory or legislative act, or any combination of those.

([1]) Communication from the Commission on the application of the European Union state aid rules to compensation granted for the provision of services of general economic interest, OJ C 8, 11.1.2012, p. 4.
([2]) Commission Decision 2012/21/EU of 20.12.2011 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to state aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest, OJ L 7, 11.1.2012, p. 3.
([3]) Communication from the Commission: European Union framework for state aid in the form of public service compensation (2011), OJ C 8, 11.1.2012, p. 15.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003161/14
to the Commission
Ashley Fox (ECR)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Ski hosting in France

The Commission will be aware that a ruling by the French courts in February 2013 banned British ski holiday companies from providing ski hosting for their guests in the French Alps.

Ski hosting involves a member of staff skiing with a group of guests to show them how to get around the resort's slopes and lift connections without having to consult a map, to show them possible lunch spots, and provide an opportunity for guests to mingle. Ski instruction is neither permitted nor undertaken by the ski hosts.

The main French ski school, ESF, claim that the practice is illegal unless the hosts hold relevant instruction qualifications. As I have outlined, these hosts do not instruct.

Can the Commission confirm whether the current ban contravenes EC law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2014)

Articles 45 (2), 49 and 56 TFEU prohibit any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of nationality or any other form of unequal treatment by the host Member State ('MS') in the context of the free movement of workers, the freedom of establishment and the free provision of services.

EC law does not, however, preclude legislation which requires ski hosts to have relevant qualifications, if this requirement is proportionate and justified by overriding reasons of general interest, as for example security concerns. It also follows from EC law that MSs must have a system in place allowing for the recognition of professional qualifications acquired in another MS.

Pursuant to Directives 2005/36/EC and 2006/123/EC, the competent authorities of the host MS are entitled to make an assessment of security concerns and to request so-called compensatory measures from a professional from another MS, such as additional tests proving the ski instructor's technical capacities, where necessary.

The Commission is aware of the first instance ruling of the Albertville Tribunal of 18 February 2013, which justified the qualification requirements by the fact that the mountain environment entails particular risks that a guide needs to be fully acquainted with to ensure optimal security. The Court noted that British ski guides could either acquire a French diploma or have their British qualifications recognised in France pursuant to Directive 2005/36/EC. In the case at hand, the Court also found an infringement of certain rules applicable to posted workers, including minimum wage requirements.

This judgment has been appealed to the Court of Appeal in Chambéry, where the case is still pending. The Commission does not comment on pending court cases.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003162/14
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Instaliranje povratnog toka (reverse flow) na plinovodima srednje Europe

Države članice EU-a iz srednje Europe razmatraju mogućnosti intenziviranja distribucije prirodnog tekućeg plina (LNG) uz pomoć tzv. povratnog toka (reverse flow) kako bi i na taj način umanjile ovisnost o uvozu plina iz Rusije. Ovakvi su dvosmjerni, povratni tokovi instalirani na većini granica, dakle na spojnicama Slovačka — Mađarska, Mađarska — Hrvatska i Slovačka — Ukrajina, temeljeno na uredbi EK-a o sigurnosti opskrbe kojom su se do 3. prosinca 2013. morali osposobiti stalni dvosmjerni kapaciteti na svim konekcijama plinovoda između država članica, uz izuzetak uvođenja povratnog toka na spojnicu Austrija — Mađarska koji nije realiziran.

Nedavnim razvojem vanjskopolitičkih događanja pitanje o potencijalnim problemima s opskrbom plina ponovno je naglašeno. Uzimajući u obzir činjenicu da sustav nije dovršen, planira li Komisija poduzimanje ikakvih mjera s ciljem stvaranja uvjeta za efikasniju razmjenu plina preko povratnog toka (reverse flow) kako bi energetski ovisnim zemljama srednje Europe pomogla u postizanju razine sigurnosti opskrbe?

Odgovor g. Oettingera u ime Komisije
(22. svibnja 2014.)

U skladu s Uredbom (EU) br. 994/2010 o mjerama zaštite sigurnosti opskrbe plinom (u daljnjem tekstu Uredba), uspostava trajnog dvosmjernog kapaciteta u načelu se na svim međudržavnim spojnim plinovodima omogućuje najkasnije 3. prosinca 2013.

Izuzeće od obveze uspostave povratnog kapaciteta može se odobriti u skladu s člankom 7. stavkom 4. Uredbe ako dodatni povratni kapacitet ne bi znatno povećao sigurnost opskrbe ili ako bi troškovi ulaganja znatno nadmašili očekivane koristi za sigurnost opskrbe.

U skladu s time, tijekom proteklih godina povratni kapaciteti uspostavljeni su na mnogim granicama gdje bi mogli ostvariti znatnu dodanu vrijednost za sigurnost opskrbe. Međutim, pokazalo se da uspostava novih povratnih kapaciteta na nekim drugim granicama nije potrebna zato što se time ne bi znatno poboljšala sigurnost opskrbe.

Ishodi procjene o potrebi uspostave povratnih kapaciteta koju provode države članice i Komisija s vremenom se mogu promijeniti zbog novih razvoja događaja u cjelokupnoj situaciji povezanoj sa sigurnošću opskrbe u EU-u.

Ako procjena rizika države članice ukazuje na potrebu dodatnog povratnog kapaciteta, potrebno je podnijeti nove prijedloge za povratni kapacitet. Komisija trenutačno procjenjuje prikladnost instaliranih povratnih kapaciteta u EU-u te će krajem godine (u okviru izvješća o provedbi Uredbe) pripremiti izvješće o odredbama o povratnim kapacitetima.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003162/14
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Reversing the flow on Central European gas pipelines

Central European Member States are considering the possibility of stepping up the distribution of liquid natural gas (LNG) by reversing pipeline flows, thus reducing the dependence on gas imports from Russia. Most cross-border interconnections, and hence those linking Slovakia and Hungary, Hungary and Croatia, and Slovakia and Ukraine, have the reverse capability needed for gas to flow in both directions, having been adapted under the EU regulation on security of supply, whereby all pipeline interconnections between Member States were supposed to have been equipped with a permanent bidirectional capacity by 3 December 2013; the one exception is the Austria-Hungary interconnection, on which no reverse flow capacity has been installed.

Recent external events have again highlighted the potential problems with security of supply where gas is concerned. Given that the system is not complete, will the Commission take any measures to enable gas to be traded efficiently by means of reverse flow, so as to ensure that Central European countries which are not self-sufficient in energy can be helped to enhance their security of supply?

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

According to Regulation (EU) No 994/2010 concerning measures to safeguard security of gas supply (hereafter, the regulation), permanent bi-directional capacity shall in, principle, be enabled on all cross-border interconnections by the 3 December 2013 at the latest.

An exemption from the reverse flow obligation can be granted, according to Article 7(4) of the regulation, if the additional reverse flow capacity will not significantly enhance the security of supply, or if the investment costs would significantly outweigh the prospective benefits for security of supply.

Accordingly, reverse flow capacities have been installed in the past years at many borders where they could bring the significant added value for security of supply. However, at some other borders the creation of new reverse flow capacities proved not to be necessary, as it would not have significantly enhanced security of supply.

The assessment of Member States and the Commission on the necessity of reverse flows may vary over time due to new developments in the overall security of supply situation in the EU.

If the Member States' Risk Assessments show that additional reverse flow capacity is needed, new proposals for reverse flow capacity should be presented. The Commission is currently assessing the adequacy of the installed reverse flow capacities in the EU and will prepare a report on the provisions on reverse flows (as part of its report on the implementation of the regulation) later this year.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003163/14
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Izmjena prijedloga Uredbe o proizvodnji biljnog reprodukcijskog materijala

Europski parlament je na zasjedanju u ožujku uvjerljivom većinom odbio prijedlog Uredbe Europskog parlamenta i Vijeća o proizvodnji i stavljanju na raspolaganje na tržište biljnog reprodukcijskog materijala kada je čak 96 % zastupnika glasovalo protiv spomenutog prijedloga. U raspravi koja je prethodila glasovanju mnogi su zastupnici izrazili zabrinutost zbog utjecaja predloženih mjera prvenstveno na očuvanje biološke raznolikosti i opstanak malih proizvođača biljnog reprodukcijskog materijala.

Upravo zbog široke raznolikosti, ali i svog prirodnog i kulturnog značaja, biljni reprodukcijski materijal reguliran je preko 12 direktiva omogućujući zakonodavstvu da bude prilagođeno svim njegovim posebnostima. Usvajanje ovakve direktive dovelo bi do izglednog rizika da se ne ispune potrebe potrošača ni nadležnih tijela već bi, upravo suprotno, ovakva direktiva mogla ugroziti nastojanja o očuvanju genetičke raznolikosti. Također, ovakva direktiva doprinijela bi dodatnom oligopolu najvećih tvrtki od kojih tri najveće već sada kontroliraju 53 % svjetskog tržišta sjemenjem, a deset najvećih kontrolira čak 73 % tržišta. Dodatne predložene administrativne barijere mogle bi dodatno ugroziti male proizvođače za koje bi te barijere često bile nepremostive.

Slijedom odbijanja prijedloga Komisije u Parlamentu koji o implementaciji ove direktive ravnopravno suodlučuje, razmatra li i kada Komisija reviziju prijedloga kako bi se pitanje reproduktivnog materijala reguliralo u skladu s očuvanjem biološke raznolikosti i interesima manjih proizvođača reproduktivnih materijala?

Odgovor g. Borga u ime Komisije
(13. svibnja 2014.)

Prijedlogom Uredbe o proizvodnji biljnog reprodukcijskog materijala i njegovu stavljanju na tržište stavilo bi se izvan snage i zamijenilo postojećih dvanaest direktiva o stavljanju na tržište.

U vezi s problemom tržišne koncentracije i očuvanja genetskih resursa upućujemo uvaženog zastupnika na odgovore na parlamentarna pitanja E-012181/2013, E-001472/2014, E-001490/2014, E-001509/2014 i E-001695/2014 ([1]).

S obzirom na stajalište Parlamenta u prvom čitanju i mišljenja koja su države članice iznijele na sastanku COREPER-a 26. ožujka 2014. Komisija trenutačno razmatra sve raspoložive mogućnosti.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003163/14
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Amended proposal for a regulation on the production of plant reproductive material

At its March part-session Parliament voted by a convincing majority to reject the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material: as many as 96% of the Members voted against the proposal. In the debate before the vote many of them expressed concern about the effect of the proposed measures, especially on the conservation of biodiversity and the survival of small-scale producers of plant reproductive material.

Precisely because of its highly varied nature, or in other words its natural and cultural significance, plant reproductive material is to be regulated by 12 directives intended to gear the legislation to the entire range of specific characteristics. If directives of that sort were to be adopted, the danger would be not only that the needs of consumers and the requirements of the authorities might not be met, but that efforts to maintain genetic diversity might even be jeopardised. Such directives would, moreover, bolster the oligopoly of the biggest firms, in which the top three already control 53% of the world market in seeds and the top ten control as much as 73% of the market. Additional administrative obstacles could further threaten small producers and in many cases would prove insurmountable.

In view of the rejection of its proposal in Parliament, which directly influences the implementation of the directives, can the Commission say whether — and if so, when — it is thinking of revising the proposal so as to ensure that the regulation brought to bear on plant reproductive material is compatible with biodiversity conservation and the interests of small-scale producers?

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

The proposal for a regulation on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material would repeal and replace the existing 12 marketing Directives.

Regarding the concerns with respect to market concentration and the conservation of genetic resources, the Honourable Member is referred to the replies to Parliamentary Questions E-012181/2013, E-001472/2014, E-001490/2014, E-001509/2014 and E-001695/2014 ([1]).

In view of the first reading position of the Parliament and the opinions stated by the Member States in the Coreper meeting of 26 March 2014, the Commission is currently examining all available options.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003164/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Accordo UE-Marocco

Il rinnovo dell'accordo per lo scambio di prodotti alimentari con il Marocco approvato dall'Unione europea in ordine alla produzione agro-alimentare pone certamente elementi di perplessità e incertezza per i paesi membri dell'area mediterranea — fra cui l'Italia — che, per vocazione e retaggio storico, fanno del settore succitato un imprescindibile fattore di forza, oltre che identitario.

La liberalizzazione delle produzioni marocchine contribuisce ad accentuare la vulnerabilità dei prodotti italiani (in particolar modo ortofrutticoli) sul mercato e a ridurne la competitività. Nello specifico, un costo del lavoro al ribasso nell'area marocchina si costituisce quale elemento di vantaggio per l'esportazione da parte del paese maghrebino, a scapito di quella italiana (soprattutto del Mezzogiorno).

Il Parlamento europeo ha votato lo scorso febbraio 2012, in sede di Plenaria a Strasburgo, il testo di approvazione al rinnovo di tale accordo. Nel documento si faceva riferimento alla possibilità di richiedere alla Commissione europea un monitoraggio della situazione in seguito all'applicazione dell'accordo per comprendere l'entità e le conseguenze dello stesso.

Alla luce delle legittime apprensioni esternate dai rappresentanti di vari paesi UE, può la Commissione:

1. comunicare, ad un anno dalla sottoscrizione dell'accordo, i dettagli relativi ai quantitativi di prodotti scambiati tra i due paesi, nonché una lista dei principali prodotti oggetto di scambio;

2. far sapere se intende produrre documenti di valutazione d'impatto, in particolare per i prodotti alimentari per cui è stata concessa una preferenza di accesso ai mercati UE?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(22 maggio 2014)

L'accordo agricolo tra l'UE e il Marocco contiene concessioni delle due Parti e include garanzie e disposizioni a tutela dei prodotti più sensibili, in particolare quelli ortofrutticoli.

Per quanto riguarda le quantità di prodotti primari scambiati dalle Parti dopo l'entrata in vigore dell'accordo, nel 2013 le esportazioni agricole dell'UE sono aumentate del 9,5 % rispetto al 2012, attestandosi a 1080 milioni di euro, e consistono prevalentemente in cereali, prodotti lattiero-caseari e carni; le importazioni dell'UE sono aumentate del 7,5 % attestandosi a 1 257 milioni dei euro e consistono principalmente in prodotti ortofrutticoli.

Nel 2007 la Commissione ha già fornito una valutazione d'impatto generale sulla sostenibilità della zona di libero scambio euromediterranea ([1]), che naturalmente comprende anche gli scambi commerciali con il Marocco. Inoltre, è in corso una valutazione d'impatto di sostenibilità commerciale nel contesto dei negoziati in corso per un accordo di libero scambio globale e approfondito fra l'UE e il Marocco ([2]).

Ulteriori informazioni sugli effetti potenziali dell'accordo agricolo tra l'UE e il Marocco saranno rese disponibili nell'ambito dell'attento monitoraggio dei prodotti sensibili, previsto dall'accordo, ed eventualmente delle salvaguardie rinforzate, se applicate.

([1]) Manchester University; Final Report of the SIA-EMFTA Project (2007) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/february/tradoc_137777.pdf
([2]) http://www.trade-sia.com/morocco/category/downloads/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003164/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: EU-Morocco agreement

The renewal of the foodstuffs trade agreement with Morocco, approved by the European Union with regard to agricultural products, is a cause of doubt and concern for Member States in the Mediterranean area, including Italy, for which, by virtue of its historical inclination and heritage, such products are an undeniable strength, indeed a matter of identity.

The liberalisation of Moroccan production is exacerbating the vulnerability and reducing the market competitiveness of Italian products (in particular fruit and vegetables). In specific terms, falling labour costs in Morocco make it advantageous for this Maghreb country to export, to the detriment of Italy (in particular southern Italy).

In February 2012 the European Parliament, in plenary session in Strasbourg, voted to approve the renewed agreement. The document contains a provision for the European Commission to monitor the situation following the implementation of the agreement, to gain an understanding of its scale and consequences.

In the light of the legitimate concerns expressed by the representatives of various EU countries, can the Commission:

1. provide, one year after signature of the agreement, details on the quantities of products traded between the two countries and a list of the primary products traded?

2. indicate whether it intends to produce impact assessment documents, in particular for foodstuffs granted preferential access to EU markets?

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

The EU-Morocco agricultural agreement includes agricultural concessions by both Parties and contains guarantees and provisions protecting the most sensitive products, notably fruit and vegetables.

Regarding the quantities of primary products traded between the two parties since the entry into force of the agreement, EU agricultural exports grew in 2013 by 9.5% compared to 2012, totalling EUR 1 080 Million consisting mainly of cereals, dairy products and meat. EU imports increased by 7.5% reaching EUR 1 257 Million comprising mainly fruit and vegetables.

The Commission already provided in 2007 a global sustainability impact assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area ([1]), including of course trade relations with Morocco. Furthermore, a Trade Sustainability impact assessment has been undertaken in the framework of the on-going EU/Morocco DCFTA ([2]) negotiations.

Additional information on the potential effects of the EU-Morocco agricultural agreement will be available in the context of the close monitoring of sensitive products foreseen in the agreement and, if applied, of the reinforced safeguards.

([1]) Manchester University; Final Report of the SIA-EMFTA Project (2007) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/february/tradoc_137777.pdf
([2]) http://www.trade-sia.com/morocco/category/downloads/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003166/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: «Big data» e servizi alla popolazione

L'utilizzo di «big data» può portare enormi vantaggi alle pubbliche amministrazioni, in quanto consente di elaborare dati e di individuare tendenze e bisogni della popolazione. Un concorso organizzato in Italia ha cercato di promuovere l'utilizzo dei big data in possesso della pubblica amministrazione tramite lo sviluppo di strumenti in grado di individuare necessità specifiche della cittadinanza e imbastire strumenti e servizi che vi rispondano in maniera adeguata.

Il concorso ha visto la presentazione d'infografiche e «data visualization» interattive, partendo dagli «open data» della regione Piemonte. Tra i vari progetti presentati figurano mappe sui flussi turistici, sull'orografia, sull'istruzione, sull'urbanizzazione, sul dissesto idrogeologico e altri ancora.

L'obiettivo del concorso è stato quello di mettere in luce l'importanza e la fruibilità dei «big data» delle pubbliche amministrazioni e di stimolare la creazione di strumenti innovativi in grado di analizzarli e creare un valore aggiunto per la cittadinanza.

La Commissione è a conoscenza di sistemi nazionali europei che utilizzino i «big data» per definire le necessità della popolazione e studiare servizi adeguati di conseguenza?

Quali sono gli obiettivi relativi fissati dall'Agenda digitale europea in merito ai «big data»? Quali sono stati i principali risultati raggiunti sino ad oggi?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(14 maggio 2014)

I rappresentanti nazionali di 15 Stati membri e della Norvegia si sono riuniti il 21 marzo 2014 ad Atene per il seminario «Pionieri nell'innovazione guidata dai dati — Visioni e soluzioni degli Stati membri dell'UE» al fine di confrontarsi sulle iniziative dei rispettivi paesi. Un seminario di follow-up è previsto per l'estate 2014.

I *big data* [1] sono un elemento importante, trattato in diversi pilastri dell'agenda digitale europea (cfr. anche: http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/about-our-goals) e di particolare spicco nelle quattro azioni seguenti: azione 3 — Aprire al riutilizzo le risorse di dati pubblici; azione 50 — Raccogliere più investimenti privati per la ricerca e l'innovazione nelle TIC; azione 51 — Rafforzare il coordinamento e la condivisione delle risorse; azione 107 — Proposte per potenziare l'industria dei dati in Europa.

I progressi compiuti e i principali risultati conseguiti in tali azioni possono riassumersi come segue:

Azione 3 — Il Parlamento europeo ha adottato nel giugno 2013 la direttiva riveduta sulle informazioni del settore pubblico, che getta le basi di un autentico diritto al loro riutilizzo; è ora cominciata la fase di attuazione da parte degli Stati membri.

Azioni 50 e 51 — La Commissione europea sta discutendo con il settore l'ipotesi di un partenariato pubblico-privato sui dati, nell'ottica di unire le forze e di raccogliere più investimenti privati da destinare alla ricerca e all'innovazione.

Azione 107 — Consultati i portatori d'interesse, la Commissione lavora attualmente a un insieme di orientamenti sulle licenze standard raccomandate, le serie di dati e l'imposizione di un corrispettivo in denaro per il riutilizzo delle informazioni del settore pubblico.

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(1) Il 27 settembre 2013 il comitato del sistema statistico europeo ha convenuto il memorandum di Scheveningen su big data e statistica ufficiale, nella cui scia la Commissione vaglia attualmente le potenzialità dei big data ai fini della statistica ufficiale e del processo politico basato su dati concreti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003166/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: 'Big data' and services to the population

The use of big data can bring huge benefits to public authorities because it makes it possible to process data and identify the trends and needs of the general public. A competition organised in Italy attempted to promote the use of big data held by public authorities through the development of tools to identify the specific needs of the public and devise tools and services to provide an adequate response to those needs.

The competition generated the presentation of infographics and interactive data visualisation, based on open data from the Piedmont region. The various projects presented included maps of tourist flows, orography, education, urbanisation and hydrogeological imbalance.

The aim of the competition was to highlight the importance and usability of the big data held by public authorities and stimulate the creation of innovative tools to analyse that data and create added value for the general public.

Is the Commission aware of European national systems which make use of big data to define the needs of the population and tailor services accordingly?

What are the relevant targets set by the European digital agenda regarding big data?

What are the key results achieved to date?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 May 2014)

National representatives of 15 Members States and Norway came together in a workshop ('Pioneers in data-driven innovation — visions & solutions from EU Member States') on 21 March 2014 in Athens to exchange on their national initiatives. A follow-up workshop is foreseen for summer 2014.

Big Data ([1]) is an important element that is addressed in several pillars of the European Digital Agenda (see also: http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/about-our-goals). It is particularly visible in the following four actions: Action 3: Open up public data resources for re-use, Action 50: Leverage more private investment for ICT research and innovation, Action 51: Reinforce the coordination and pooling of resources and Action 107: Proposals to strengthen the data industry in Europe.

Progress and key results achieved in these actions can be summarised as follows:

Action 3: The revised Public Sector Information Directive which lays the ground for a genuine right to re-use public information was adopted by the EU Parliament in June 2013 and is now being implemented by the Member States.

Actions 50 and 51: A public-private partnership on Data is currently being discussed between EC and industry to join forces and to leverage more private investment for research and innovation.

Action 107: After having consulted the interested parties, the Commission is currently working on a series of guidelines on recommended standard licenses, data sets and charging for re-use of public sector information.

([1]) On 27 September 2013 the European Statistical System Committee agreed on the Scheveningen Memorandum on Big Data and Official Statistics. As a follow-up to this memorandum the Commission is exploring the potential of Big Data for Official Statistics and evidence-based policy making.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003167/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Diminuzione del numero di partite IVA aperte in Italia

Nel gennaio 2014 il ministero del Tesoro ha registrato l'apertura di circa 79 000 nuove partite IVA in Italia, cioè un calo del 9 % rispetto al gennaio 2013. Il ministero ha inoltre registrato una spaccatura territoriale, con quasi il 46 % delle nuove partite IVA aperte nel nord del paese e il resto distribuito tra centro, meridione e regioni insulari. Anche questi dati confermano che gli strascichi della crisi finanziaria ed economica sono tutt'altro che conclusi e che sono necessarie misure per rafforzare la competitività del paese.

Può la Commissione fornire dati relativi alle variazioni nel numero di partite IVA aperte negli altri Stati membri?

La Commissione può far sapere se il dato italiano si iscrive al di sopra o al di sotto della media europea?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(29 aprile 2014)

La registrazione dei soggetti passivi è di competenza nazionale degli Stati membri. Il ruolo della Commissione in questo settore è limitato: si occupa unicamente di controllare che uno Stato membro abbia attuato una corretta procedura di registrazione, ma non ha accesso ai dati operativi riguardanti il numero delle partite IVA. Tali informazioni sono accessibili alle sole autorità fiscali nazionali. Pertanto, la Commissione non è in grado di fornire dati relativi alle variazioni nel numero di partite IVA aperte in altri Stati membri, né comunicare se l'Italia si colloca al di sopra o al di sotto della media europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003167/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Fall in the number of new VAT registrations in Italy

In January 2014, the Italian Treasury reported the registration of some 79 000 new VAT numbers in Italy, a fall of 9% compared to January 2013. The data also point to a territorial split, with almost 46% of new VAT registrations clustered in the north of the country and the rest scattered throughout the central, southern and island regions. These data also confirm that the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis is far from over, and that measures are needed to boost the country's competitiveness.

Can the Commission provide data on changes in the number of new VAT registrations in other Member States?

Can the Commission state whether Italy stands above or below the European average?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(29 April 2014)

The registration of taxable persons is a national competence of the Member States. The role of the Commission in this area is limited. It monitors only whether a Member States has implemented a proper registration process, but does not have access to operational data regarding the number of VAT registrations. This information is available to the national tax authorities only. Therefore, the Commission cannot provide data on changes in the number of new VAT registrations in other Member States, nor inform whether Italy stands above or below the European average.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003168/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Crisi economica ed aumento dei piccoli reati economici

Un'associazione italiana di rappresentanza dei consumatori ha denunciato un incremento del tasso di piccoli reati economici commessi in Italia, tanto da spingere a parlare di emergenza nazionale. È stato registrato infatti che dal 2010 al 2013 questi reati sono aumentati del 25 % circa, passando da 35 mila a 44 mila casi l'anno, vale a dire più di 120 ogni giorno. Ancora più drammatico l'incremento degli scippi, passati da 14 mila a 21 mila l'anno, e dei furti in appartamento, aumentati del 65 %, da 149 mila a 264 mila.

Ancora una volta, come causa principale di tale aumento viene additata la crisi economica, come dimostra il cambiamento dell'identikit del «classico taccheggiatore»: non si tratta più di un ladro di professione, ma sempre più spesso di ladri improvvisati — poveri cittadini dal reddito eroso dalla disoccupazione, dalla tassazione e, più in generale, da una politica di austerità che ha colpito soprattutto le fasce a reddito medio-basso della popolazione italiana. Il furto è divenuto quindi l'extrema ratio per quelle persone che hanno visto il proprio potere d'acquisto fortemente compromesso.

1. Può la Commissione fornire dati sulla variazione dei piccoli reati economici nel periodo della crisi economica e finanziaria negli altri Stati membri europei?

2. È essa in grado di fornire una media europea?

3. Ritiene che si possa parlare di un fenomeno comune europeo?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(19 maggio 2014)

La Commissione non dispone di alcuna informazione sulla variazione dei piccoli reati economici negli Stati membri nel periodo della crisi finanziaria, e non è in grado di dire se il loro aumento è un fenomeno su scala europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003168/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Economic crisis and rise in minor economic crimes

An Italian consumer association has reported a rise in the number of minor economic crimes committed in Italy, to the extent that there is talk of a national emergency. Records show that the number of crimes of this type increased by approximately 25% between 2010 and 2013, from 35 000 to 44 000 a year, i.e. more than 120 crimes a day. Even more striking is the increase in bag-snatching incidents, which have risen from 14 000 to 21 000 a year, and domestic burglaries, which have seen a 65% rise, from 149 000 to 264 000.

Once again, the main reason for this increase is purported to be the economic crisis, as is demonstrated by the change in the identikit of 'traditional shoplifters': these are no longer professional thieves, but instead are much more commonly impulsive thieves — unfortunate citizens whose income has been eroded due to unemployment, taxation and, more generally, an austerity policy that has impacted on the low-medium income brackets of the Italian population in particular. People who have seen their purchasing power severely compromised have turned to theft as an extreme measure.

1. Can the Commission supply data on fluctuations in minor economic crimes during the economic and financial crisis in the other European Member States?

2. Can it provide a European average?

3. Does it believe that this is a common European phenomenon?

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

The Commission has no information on the fluctuation of minor economic crimes in the Member States during the financial crisis, and cannot say whether their rise is an EU-wide phenomenon.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003169/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Disservizi legati al digitale terrestre

Un ricercatore italiano ha avviato sul web una sorta di forum contenente una mappa che indica i disagi relativi al malfunzionamento dei servizi legati al digitale terrestre. Si tratta di un sistema in cui gli utenti e i lettori possono segnalare eventuali problemi, contribuendo così ad arricchire la mappa. La mappa disegna un disservizio abbastanza diffuso sul territorio, con picchi di segnalazioni in aree collinari come la Liguria, o in aree geograficamente più isolate, come le comunità montane piemontesi.

Si tratta di un disservizio che mina il diritto all'informazione — tenendo conto anche del fatto che in Italia la televisione è ancora lo strumento maggiormente usato dalla cittadinanza per informarsi su ciò che accade nel Paese stesso e nel mondo — e che ancora non ha trovato un rimedio definitivo.

Alla luce di quanto detto, può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. questo genere di disservizi viola il diritto europeo in materia di servizi audiovisuali;

2. esistono mappature simili per altri Stati membri dell'UE o, in generale, se altri Stati membri risentono di un livello simile di disservizio;

3. è a conoscenza di altri Stati membri in cui era presente lo stesso disservizio, ma che sono stati in grado di risolvere in maniera definitiva il problema?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(12 maggio 2014)

Le norme applicabili in Europa al settore audiovisivo, quali definite nella direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi ([1]), non disciplinano gli aspetti relativi alla trasmissione dei segnali. La pianificazione delle frequenze della trasmissione televisiva terrestre è una competenza degli Stati membri soggetta alle prescrizioni generali del quadro normativo per le comunicazioni elettroniche ([2]) e del programma UE relativo alla politica in materia di spettro radio ([3]). L'articolo 7 di quest'ultimo programma prevede che gli Stati membri, in cooperazione con la Commissione, si prefiggano di garantire la disponibilità di sufficiente spettro radio per la fornitura dei servizi audiovisivi, ma non riguarda le difficoltà relative alle prestazioni tecniche.

Cercare di raggiungere il maggior numero possibile di persone rientra tra le normali attività degli operatori di reti radiotelevisive, non da ultimo per ragioni commerciali. Tali azioni sono talora limitate dagli investimenti necessari per estendere la copertura e dall'esigenza di evitare interferenze con i paesi limitrofi. In alcuni casi gli operatori sono tenuti a rispettare obblighi di copertura imposti da uno Stato membro. Si tratta tuttavia di una competenza nazionale. La Commissione non è a conoscenza di mappature simili a quella del ricercatore italiano realizzate in altri Stati membri.

([1]) Direttiva 2010/13/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 10 marzo 2010, relativa al coordinamento di determinate disposizioni legislative, regolamentari e amministrative degli Stati membri concernenti la fornitura di servizi di media audiovisivi (direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi), GU L 95 del 15.4.2010, pag. 1.

([2]) Direttiva 2002/21/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 7 marzo 2002, che istituisce un quadro normativo comune per le reti ed i servizi di comunicazione elettronica, come modificata (GU L 337 del 18.12.2009).

([3]) Decisione n. 243/2012/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 14 marzo 2012, che istituisce un programma pluriennale relativo alla politica in materia di spettro radio (GU L 81 del 21.3.2012, pag. 7).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003169/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Problems with digital terrestrial television

An Italian researcher has launched a kind of Internet forum containing a map which highlights problems with the malfunctioning of digital terrestrial services. This system allows consumers and members of the public to report any problems they experience, and these are then added to the map. The map shows fairly widespread problems across the country, with signal peaks occurring in hilly areas such as Liguria, as well as in geographically more isolated areas such as the mountain communities of Piedmont.

Given that television is still the most popular means used by the population in Italy to find out about what's happening in the country and throughout the rest of the world, these problems undermine the right to information and a definitive solution to these problems is yet to be found.

In the light of the above, can the Commission clarify the following:

1. Do these types of problems infringe European law on audiovisual services?

2. Have similar mappings been carried out by other EU Member States and, generally speaking, are other Member States experiencing similar problems?

3. Is it aware of other Member States that have experienced the same issues with poor service and that have succeeded in introducing a permanent solution to the problem?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

Applicable European audiovisual law as set out in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([1]) does not regulate signal transmission aspects. Frequency planning for terrestrial delivery of television broadcasting is a Member State competence subject to the general requirements of the regulatory framework for electronic communications ([2]) and the EU Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP) ([3]). While Article 7 RSPP requires Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, to aim at ensuring there is sufficient spectrum available for the provision of audiovisual services, it does not concern technical performance difficulties.

It is part of the normal operation of a broadcast network operator to try to cover as much of the population as possible, not least for commercial reasons. These actions can at times be circumscribed by the investment needed to extend coverage and by the need to avoid interference into a neighbouring country. In some cases the operator may also have to fulfil a coverage obligation imposed by a Member State. This is however a national competence. The Commission is not aware of any mappings in other Member States similar to that of the Italian researcher.

([1]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive), OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1.

([2]) Directive 2002/21/EC of 7 March 2002 or a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services, as amended COJ L337, 18.12.2009).

([3]) Decision No 243/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2012 establishing a Multiannual Radio Spectrum Policy Programme, OJ L 81, 21.3.2012, p. 7.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003170/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Normative europee in materia di sicurezza degli edifici a uso abitativo

Lo scorso 5 marzo, un'esplosione in un'abitazione di Capistrello, nell'Aquilano, ha provocato il crollo parziale di una vecchia palazzina. Un uomo è rimasto ucciso, mentre la moglie e il figlio sono stati ricoverati d'urgenza nell'ospedale di Avezzano.

Secondo i vigili del fuoco, l'esplosione sarebbe stata provocata da una fuoriuscita di gas da una bombola, al primo piano dell'edificio.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. esistono atti normativi europei specifici in materia di sicurezza degli edifici a uso abitativo e, in particolare, della sicurezza legata ai sistemi di fornitura energetica;

2. se dispone di dati sulla valutazione dell'applicazione di questi atti normativi da parte degli Stati membri?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(16 maggio 2014)

La Commissione si rammarica di tale sfortunato incidente. Secondo le informazioni in possesso della Commissione i risultati dell'indagine non sono ancora disponibili, appare pertanto prematuro trarre conclusioni allo stadio presente.

Occorre tuttavia sottolineare che la sicurezza strutturale e tecnica degli edifici è responsabilità degli Stati membri nonché delle regioni nei paesi con struttura federale. I regolamenti edilizi regionali e nazionali contengono disposizioni tecniche. Anche il controllo degli edifici dovrebbe essere effettuato a livello nazionale o regionale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003170/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: European regulations on the safety of residential buildings

On 5 March an explosion in a residential building at Capistrello in Aquilano caused the partial collapse of an old apartment block. One man was killed and his wife and son were rushed to hospital at Avezzano.

According to firemen, the explosion was caused by a gas leak from a cylinder on the first storey of the building.

Can the Commission indicate whether:

1. There is specific European legislation to regulate the safety of residential buildings, inparticular the safety of energy supply systems?

2. It is in possession of data on the implementation of such legislation by Member States?

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

The Commission deplores this unfortunate accident. According to information available to the Commission, the results of the investigation are not yet available and therefore it appears premature to draw conclusions at this stage.

However, it should be stressed that the structural and technical safety of buildings is a responsibility of Member States, and of regions in countries with federal structures. Technical requirements are laid down in national or regional building codes. Also the control of buildings should be carried out at national or regional level.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003171/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) e Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Rischio di stallo economico in Ucraina e conseguenze per l'Unione europea

Una delle conseguenze della crisi politica e militare ucraina riguarda il rallentamento e il blocco di alcune attività economiche e, in generale, dell'intera attività economica statale. Gli stipendi statali tardano a arrivare, il turismo è praticamente dissolto, uomini d'affari che prima visitavano quotidianamente il paese ora sono praticamente introvabili nelle strade della capitale.

Inoltre, il potenziale rischio di un embargo economico da parte della Russia, specialmente nei rifornimenti energetici, mina ancor di più la situazione già instabile dell'economia ucraina. In questa situazione gli aiuti promessi da Stati Uniti e Unione europea possono giocare un ruolo fondamentale nel restaurare la fiducia dei mercati nel paese dell'Europa orientale e garantirvi la ripresa della normale attività economica.

A tal proposito, dispone la Commissione di dati aggiornati sullo stato della situazione economica dell'Ucraina?

Può fornire informazioni riguardo alle ricadute che lo stallo economico del paese potrebbe avere sull'economia degli Stati membri dell'UE che hanno instaurato forti relazioni commerciali con Kiev?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(11 giugno 2014)

La Commissione segue con attenzione gli sviluppi politici ed economici in Ucraina e si è impegnata a fornire al paese una consistente assistenza finanziaria per sostenerne la stabilizzazione economica e finanziaria. La Commissione ritiene che le necessarie riforme strutturali concordate con le istituzioni finanziarie internazionali e da esse sostenute avranno effetti positivi per l'economia ucraina.

Per sostenere l'ambizioso programma di riforme delle autorità ucraine e soddisfare il notevole fabbisogno di finanziamenti del paese, la Commissione ha accelerato le proposte legislative relative all'assistenza macrofinanziaria (AMF) dell'UE e alle preferenze commerciali autonome, che consentiranno all'Unione di ridurre unilateralmente o di abolire i dazi doganali sulle merci originarie dell'Ucraina. In aggiunta al prestito di 1,61 miliardi di EUR concesso nell'ambito dell'AMF, la Commissione ha erogato 355 milioni di EUR sotto forma di sostegno al bilancio nell'ambito del programma «Contratto di potenziamento istituzionale», integrati da un programma di 10 milioni di EUR a sostegno della società civile.

La Commissione ha analizzato l'esposizione economica degli Stati membri nei confronti dell'Ucraina. Le previsioni di primavera 2014 della Commissione, pubblicate il 5 maggio, tengono conto dell'incidenza della situazione in Ucraina. Le previsioni sono disponibili all'indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2014_spring_forecast_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003171/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Risk of economic stalemate in the Ukraine and consequences for the European Union

One of the consequences of the political and military crisis in the Ukraine is the slowdown and blocking of certain commercial activities and, in general, of all government economic operations. Government salaries are late arriving, the tourist industry has virtually collapsed, businessmen who used to visit the country on a daily basis are now rarely to be seen on the streets of the capital.

Moreover, the potential risk of an economic embargo by Russia, particularly in the area of energy supplies, undermines the already unstable Ukrainian economy even more. In this context, the assistance promised by the United States and the European Union could play a key role in restoring the confidence of the markets in this Eastern European country and enable normal commercial activities to be resumed.

In this context, does the Commission have up-to-date information on the economic situation in the Ukraine?

Can it supply information on the potential repercussions of the economic stalemate in the Ukraine on the economy of the EU Member States which have established close commercial relations with Kiev?

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

The Commission closely monitors the political and economic developments in Ukraine, and is committed to stand by Ukraine by providing significant financial assistance to support economic and financial stabilisation. The Commission believes that Ukraine's economy will benefit from the necessary structural reforms being agreed with and supported by the international financial institutions.

In order to support the ambitious reform programme of the authorities in Ukraine and address the substantial financing needs of the country, the Commission has fast-tracked the legislative proposals concerning the EU's Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA), as well as the autonomous trade preferences that allow the EU to reduce unilaterally or eliminate customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine. In addition to the MFA loan, worth up to EUR 1.61 billion, the Commission has extended EUR 355 million in the form of budget support under the 'State Building Contract' programme. The latter is complemented by a EUR 10 million programme in support for civil society.

The Commission has analysed the economic exposure of EU Member States to Ukraine. The impact of the situation in Ukraine was taken into consideration in the Commission Spring 2014 Forecast, which was published on 5 May. The forecast is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2014_spring_forecast_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003172/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Autobomba in Somalia — valutazione dell'impegno europeo per la stabilizzazione

Di recente un'autobomba è esplosa nel centro di Mogadiscio, provocando numerose vittime. L'esplosione è avvenuta di fronte ad un hotel (peraltro già obiettivo di un altro attentato nel 2013) in un'area della città prevalentemente frequentata da funzionari governativi e uomini d'affari stranieri. L'attacco non è stato ancora rivendicato, ma si teme che dietro l'esplosione ci sia la firma del gruppo miliziano islamico fondamentalista Shebab, collegato direttamente con Al-Qaeda.

La Somalia è una delle aree storicamente più instabili del continente africano e del sistema internazionale e la sua stabilizzazione e crescita socio-economica rappresentano un obiettivo fondamentale per la sicurezza europea. A tal proposito, l'UE è attivamente impegnata nel Corno d'Africa in tre missioni nel quadro della Politica di sicurezza e difesa comune e ingenti sono stati i finanziamenti erogati tramite fondi di aiuto umanitario, come i 37 milioni EUR del programma ECHO previsti per il 2014 o i circa 200 milioni EUR in programmi di sviluppo pluriennali.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è in grado di verificare la presenza di cittadini europei tra le vittime;

2. se ritiene che l'approccio strategico globale adottato nel Corno d'Africa stia avendo un impatto effettivo sullo sviluppo e la stabilizzazione del paese e dell'intera regione;

3. se ha motivo di ritenere che Al-Qaeda abbia un forte radicamento sul territorio somalo;

4. per quale motivo i fondi del programma ECHO hanno subito un calo costante negli ultimi anni dimezzandosi quasi rispetto al 2011?

Risposta data dall'Alta Rappresentante/Vice presidente Ashton a nome della Commissione
(30 giugno 2014)

La Commissione può confermare che non risultano cittadini europei tra le vittime del recente attentato all'autobomba avvenuto a Mogadiscio a cui si fa riferimento.

L'approccio strategico globale adottato per il Corno d'Africa sta avendo un impatto effettivo sullo sviluppo e la stabilizzazione della Somalia e dell'intera regione del Corno d'Africa. Il conflitto prolungato che sta attraversando la Somalia impone di adottare una prospettiva e sforzi a lungo termine per l'ottenimento della pace e della sicurezza. Vaste aree del paese sono ancora sotto il controllo del movimento Al Shabaab. Per questo motivo è necessaria un'azione tenace al fine di riprendere gradualmente il controllo del paese, ripristinando un'adeguata amministrazione civile e dando seguito ad attività di sviluppo appropriate.

Al Shabaab è la principale organizzazione terrorista responsabile dei continui attentati in Somalia. Anche se tale organizzazione ha legami con Al-Qaeda si tratta anzitutto di un fenomeno nato e cresciuto localmente. La sua attività costituisce una risposta a rivendicazioni di lunga data provenienti da clan marginalizzati all'interno della Somalia riuscendo a volgere abilmente a proprio favore i contrasti tra i diversi clan ed elite.

Per quanto riguarda l'intervento umanitario del programma ECHO, nel 2011 una grave crisi alimentare verificatasi in Somalia ha comportato la dichiarazione di una situazione eccezionale di carestia che ha giustificato un aiuto umanitario straordinario. Nel frattempo la situazione è lentamente migliorata, pur restando critica in alcune parti del paese, mentre nuove gravi crisi umanitarie sono sorte in altre aree del mondo. Dato che il bilancio dell'aiuto umanitario resta limitato è necessario stabilire delle priorità. La Commissione tuttavia mantiene sempre una presenza importante in Somalia ed è pronta a rispondere all'eventuale deteriorarsi della situazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003172/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Car bomb in Somalia — evaluation of European commitment to stabilisation

A car bomb recently exploded in the centre of Mogadishu, causing numerous casualties. The explosion occurred in front of a hotel (which had, moreover, been the subject of a previous attack in 2013) in an area of the city which is popular with government officials and foreign businessmen. As yet, no-one has claimed responsibility for the attack but it is feared that the explosion is the work of the militant Islamic fundamentalist group Shebab, which has direct links with Al-Qaeda.

Historically, Somalia is one of the most unstable areas in Africa and, indeed, the world, and its stabilisation and socioeconomic growth are crucial to European security. In this context, the EU is actively involved in the Horn of Africa in three missions which are implemented under the auspices of the Common Security and Defence Policy, and huge sums of money have been granted through humanitarian aid funds, e.g. 37 million Euros of funding under the ECHO programme in 2014 or approximately 200 million Euros of funding for multi-annual development programmes.

Can the Commission advise:

1. Whether it is in a position to confirm whether or not European citizens were among the casualties?

2. If it believes that the overall strategic approach adopted in the Horn of Africa is effective in developing and stabilising the country and the region as a whole?

3. If it has reason to believe that Al-Qaeda has strong roots in Somalia?

4. Why funding under the ECHO programme has constantly been cut over recent years and is now almost half what it was in 2011?

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

The Commission confirms there were no European citizens among the casualties of the referred to recent car bombing in Mogadishu.

The overall adopted approach to the Horn of Africa is effective in the development and the stabilisation of Somalia and the Horn of Africa region as a whole. Somalia is dealing with a protracted conflict, which requires a longterm perspective and efforts towards peace and security. Large parts of the country are still under Al Shabaab control. As such, persistence is required to slowly regain control over the country and follow up with appropriate civilian administration and development activities.

Al Shabaab is the main terrorist organisation responsible for the continued attacks in Somalia. Although the organisation has affiliations with Al-Qaeda, it is in the first place a homegrown phenomenon. Their actions are a response to long term grievances from marginalized clans within Somalia and have competently turned clan and elite disputes in their favour.

As for ECHO's humanitarian intervention, in 2011, a severe food and nutrition crisis in Somalia triggered an exceptional declaration of famine that justified a significant humanitarian assistance. Since then the situation had slowly improved but it remains critical in some parts of the country, while new major humanitarian crises have emerged around the world. As the humanitarian budget remains limited, priorities have to be made. The Commission nevertheless keeps a significant presence in Somalia and remains ready to respond to any deterioration of the situation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003173/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Effetti dell'austerità sui mercati immobiliari

Lo scorso anno il mercato immobiliare italiano ha registrato un calo abbastanza importante, che si è attestato intorno al 10 %, raggiungendo livelli pari a quelli degli anni Ottanta. Questi dati rappresentano in realtà una chiara conseguenza del calo del reddito di diversi nuclei famigliari — in particolare nelle fasce a reddito più basso, particolarmente colpite dalle misure di austerità. Non è un caso che questo calo si accompagni anche a quello nel settore di consumi alimentari (-3,6 miliardi EUR).

Il calo della disponibilità economica dei cittadini e la forte tassazione hanno pesantemente colpito anche i piccoli risparmiatori — dato acuito dalla minore disponibilità degli istituti di credito a concedere prestiti a privati.

Analizzando questo tetro scenario sociale, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se anche altri Stati membri hanno registrato cali simili;

2. se ritiene che le misure di austerità abbiano influito sul peggioramento dei dati in questione;

3. se è a conoscenza di buone pratiche negli Stati membri in materia di politiche di pieno sfruttamento degli immobili ad uso abitativo?

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

1. In base ai dati Eurostat, nel 2013 i prezzi delle abitazioni in Italia sono scesi del 6,9 % (dato corretto per l'inflazione). Dopo aver toccato il massimo nel 2007, il calo complessivo del prezzo delle abitazioni corretto per l'inflazione ha raggiunto il 16 %, riportando i prezzi reali delle abitazioni in Italia ai livelli del 2002. Gli Stati membri che hanno registrato un boom del mercato immobiliare prima della crisi hanno visto un calo dei prezzi delle abitazioni molto più accentuato: nello stesso periodo, ad esempio, i prezzi reali delle abitazioni sono scesi del 46 % in Irlanda e del 42 % in Spagna ([1]).

2. Dai lavori svolti dai servizi della Commissione emerge che le recenti tendenze del mercato degli immobili residenziali sono principalmente dovute alle sopravvalutazioni preesistenti e al più ampio contesto macroeconomico ([2]). In questa logica, il risanamento di bilancio, benché indispensabile per realizzare la sostenibilità delle finanze pubbliche, può avere avuto effetti a breve termine sull'attività economica, contribuendo così alla correzione dei prezzi degli alloggi. Allo stesso tempo, il miglioramento della sostenibilità delle finanze pubbliche e della disciplina di bilancio contribuiranno a migliorare le condizioni di accesso al credito per il settore privato e consentiranno un aggiustamento ordinato del mercato immobiliare. È infatti importante osservare che i dati relativi al rapporto prezzi/reddito e al rapporto prezzi/affitto a partire dal 2009 indicano che il mercato immobiliare italiano era notevolmente al di sopra dei prezzi ritenuti in linea con i fondamentali ([3]).

3. La definizione delle politiche in materia di alloggi è di competenza degli Stati membri. Diverse raccomandazioni specifiche per paese, proposte dalla Commissione e adottate dal Consiglio nel 2013, mirano a migliorare il funzionamento dei mercati dell'edilizia abitativa (ad esempio Spagna, Paesi Bassi, Svezia, Regno Unito) ([4]). Tra queste, lo sviluppo dei mercati degli affitti si pone come alternativa economicamente valida alla proprietà, favorendo la mobilità del lavoro e migliorando la stabilità del mercato immobiliare nel suo insieme ([5]).

([1]) I dati ufficiali Eurostat sulle variazioni dei prezzi delle abitazioni in tutti gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea (dati corretti per l'inflazione) sono disponibili al seguente indirizzo: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tipsho10&plugin=1.

([2]) Cfr. Commissione europea (2012), «Assessing the dynamics of house prices in the euro area», Quarterly report on the euro area, 4:7-18, e uno studio specifico sul mercato dell'edilizia abitativa in Spagna di Cuerpo, C. e Pontuch, P. (2013): «Spanish housing market: adjustment and implications», Country Focus, 8.

([3]) Commissione europea (2012), op. cit. e Commissione europea (2010), «House price imbalances in the euro area,» Quarterly report on the euro area, 3:32-7.

([4]) GU C 217 del 30.7.2013, pag. 1.

([5]) Cfr. anche Cuerpo, C., S. Kalantaryan and P. Pontuch, (2014), «Rental Market Regulation in the European Union,» European Economy-Economic Papers, 515.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003173/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: The effects of austerity on property markets

Last year the Italian property market plummeted by around 10% to levels equivalent to those experienced in the 1980s. In fact these figures are a clear consequence of a fall in the income of many households, in particular in the lower income brackets particularly affected by the austerity measures. It is no chance that this fall is accompanied by a fall in food consumption (EUR -3.6 billion).

The fall in the disposable income of citizens and high taxation levels have also severely impacted on small savers, a situation exacerbated by unwillingness of credit institutions to grant loans to private individuals.

In consideration of this grim social scenario, the Commission is asked whether:

1. Other Member States have recorded similar drops?

2. It considers that austerity measures have contributed to these worsening figures?

3. It is aware of good practices in Member States in terms of policies for the full use of residential properties?

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

1. According to Eurostat data, in 2013, the house prices in Italy fell by 6.9% in inflation-adjusted terms. The total inflation-adjusted house price fall from the 2007 peak reached 16%, bringing real house prices in Italy back to their 2002 levels. The Member States that experienced a property boom prior to the crisis underwent a much more accentuated fall in house prices; for instance, real house prices fell over the same period by 46% in Ireland and by 42% in Spain ([1]).

2. Work by the Commission Services shows that the pre-existing overvaluations and the broader macroeconomic environment have been the main drivers of the recent housing market developments ([2]). In this line, fiscal consolidation, although indispensable for achieving the sustainability of public finances, may have had short-term effects on economic activity and, by this channel, contribute to the correction in housing prices. At the same time, the improvement in fiscal sustainability and fiscal discipline will help to improve credit conditions for the private sector and allow an orderly adjustment in the housing market. Indeed, it is important to note that price-to-income and price-to-rental ratios as of 2009 signalled that the Italian housing market was significantly above the prices consistent with fundamentals ([3]).

3. The design of housing policies is the competence of the Member States. Several country-specific recommendations, put forward by the Commission and adopted by the Council in 2013 ([4]), aim at improving the functioning of housing markets (e.g. Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, UK). Among them, the development of rental markets stands as an economically sound alternative to homeownership, favouring labour mobility and improving the stability of the overall housing market ([5]).

([1]) Official Eurostat data on inflation-adjusted house price changes for all EU Member States can be accessed at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tipsho10&plugin=1

([2]) See European Commission (2012), 'Assessing the dynamics of house prices in the euro area', Quarterly report on the euro area, 4:7-18, as well as a specific study of the Spanish housing market by Cuerpo, C. and Pontuch, P. (2013): 'Spanish housing market: adjustment and implications', Country Focus, 8.

([3]) European Commission (2012), op. cit. and European Commission (2010), 'House price imbalances in the euro area', Quarterly report on the euro area, 3:32-7.

([4]) OJ C 217, 30.7.2013, p. 1.

([5]) See also Cuerpo, C., S. Kalantaryan and P. Pontuch, (2014), 'Rental Market Regulation in the European Union', European Economy-Economic Papers, 515.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003174/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Elezioni truccate in Corea del Nord

Le elezioni parlamentari tenutesi la scorsa settimana in Corea del Nord dimostrano come il paese sia profondamente distante da qualsiasi logica democratica: l'affluenza alle urne è stata del 100 %, mentre l'attuale leader, Kim Jong Un, è stato rieletto con zero voti contrari, anche perché unico candidato del proprio distretto. Gli organi di stampa della Corea del Nord hanno parlato di un plebiscito che è espressione del sostegno e della fiducia della popolazione nei confronti del giovane leader.

Secondo alcuni esperti, le elezioni, del tutto fasulle da un punto di vista politico, sono uno strumento di screening demografico, tramite il quale il regime può verificare se qualcuno ha attraversato illegalmente la frontiera con la Cina (sarebbe quantomeno arduo attraversare il confine con la Corea del Sud) e schedarlo come fuggitivo.

In merito a tale questione, ha la Commissione intenzione di esprimere il proprio dissenso nei confronti della violazione dei più elementari diritti politici (attivi e passivi) dei cittadini nordcoreani?

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

L'UE è a conoscenza della drammatica situazione dei diritti umani, comprese le libertà politiche, nella Repubblica popolare democratica di Corea (RPDC) e ha sollevato ripetutamente la questione delle violazioni di tali diritti nella RPDC sia con le autorità di questo paese che in altri consessi, in particolare in sede di ONU. L'Unione ha copatrocinato la risoluzione del Consiglio delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani che a marzo 2013 ha istituito la commissione incaricata di indagare sui diritti umani nella RPDC, la cui relazione è stata resa pubblica di recente e viene attualmente discussa in sede di ONU. L'intervento dell'UE alla sessione del Consiglio delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani del 17 marzo in occasione della presentazione formale della relazione ha condannato esplicitamente questa situazione (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un_geneva/documents/eu_statments/human_right/20140317_id_with_the_coi_on_dprk.pdf). L'UE collaborerà con tutti i suoi partner, in particolare l'ONU, per garantire un seguito appropriato alle conclusioni della commissione d'indagine. L'UE mantiene l'impegno a contribuire, nella misura del possibile, a migliorare la situazione dei diritti umani nella RPDC e continua a riflettere su come contribuire efficacemente a questo obiettivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003174/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Rigged elections in North Korea

The parliamentary elections that were held last week in North Korea have once again highlighted just how far away the country is from any form of true democracy, with voter turnout standing at 100% and its current leader, Kim Jong Un, being re-elected without a single vote being cast against him, not least because he was the only candidate standing in his district. If the North Korean press is to be believed, these elections show that the entire population is behind its young leader and has immense faith in him.

Some experts believe that the elections, which are entirely artificial from a political perspective, are actually used by the regime to screen the population, so that it can check whether anyone has illegally crossed the Chinese border (which is not as heavily guarded as the South Korean border) and class them as fugitives.

In light of the above, does the Commission intend to speak out against the continued violation of the most fundamental political rights (both active and passive) of North Korea's citizens?

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

The EU is aware of the dire situation of human rights, including political freedoms, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It has been consistently raising the issue of human rights abuses in the DPRK both with the DPRK authorities and beyond, especially in the United Nations. The EU co-initiated the UN Human Rights Council resolution that, in March 2013, established the UN Commission of inquiry on human rights in the DPRK, the report of which has recently been made public and is being debated in the UN. The EU's intervention at the UN Human Rights Council session of 17 March on the occasion of the formal presentation of said report was clear in its condemnation of the situation
(http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un_geneva/documents/eu_statments/human_right/20140317_id_with_the_coi_on_dprk.pdf).
The EU will work with all its partners, and especially the UN, to ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission of Inquiry's findings. The EU remains committed to contributing wherever possible to improving the situation of human rights in the DPRK and keeps exploring ways to make an effective contribution to this goal.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003175/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Eventi di promozione dell'innovazione agricola in Europa

Nei giorni scorsi è stato assegnato a Milano il premio per l'innovazione agricola per giovani agricoltori «Oscar Green 2013». Il concorso che sfocia in tale premio vuole stimolare nuove idee in materia di metodi di valorizzazione e sfruttamento sostenibile del territorio attraverso l'utilizzazione di specifiche risorse locali.

Tra i progetti premiati si trovano idee eclettiche quanto innovative quali, ad esempio, la produzione di caviale dalle lumache, la progettazione e gestione di «agri-beach» (dove si coltivano direttamente gran parte degli alimenti utilizzati per la ristorazione nel chiosco in spiaggia), la coltivazione di funghi a partire da fondi di caffè, la produzione di mozzarella a base di latte di pecora altamente digeribile o la fabbricazione di cosmetici naturali a chilometro zero.

Il concorso ha visto un'ampia partecipazione di giovani coltivatori diretti, che hanno potuto elaborare tutta una serie di idee e pratiche innovative e sostenibili, perfettamente in linea con il perseguimento di una politica agricola giovane, inclusiva, sostenibile e competitiva.

Può la Commissione chiarire se:

1. È a conoscenza di tale concorso?

2. È a conoscenza di concorsi simili svolti in altri Stati membri?

3. Ritiene opportuno organizzare eventi simili a livello europeo, in modo da facilitare il confronto tra i giovani agricoltori di diversi Stati membri e lo scambio di buone pratiche, stimolando così l'innovazione nel settore?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(2 maggio 2014)

La Commissione ritiene che l'innovazione sia un elemento chiave per la crescita economica e per lo sviluppo sostenibile di vari settori e territori. In effetti l'innovazione è un obiettivo trasversale per la futura politica di sviluppo rurale e per tutte le misure che comprende e il partenariato europeo per l'innovazione potrà contribuirvi in maniera particolare.

La Commissione è al corrente delle iniziative che gli Stati membri e le regioni hanno messo in atto al fine di promuovere l'innovazione nel settore agricolo e nelle aree rurali e se ne rallegra. Saranno incoraggiate le nuove idee a favore dell'uso sostenibile delle risorse locali.

La Commissione ritiene opportuno organizzare questo tipo di manifestazioni a livello europeo ed è per questo motivo che nella proposta di politica di sviluppo rurale 2014-2020 ha introdotto un premio per la cooperazione locale e innovativa nelle zone rurali. Tuttavia, nel corso dei negoziati sulla riforma della PAC, la proposta di introdurre un premio per la cooperazione locale e innovativa nelle zone rurali non è stata accettata dai colegislatori.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003175/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Events promoting agricultural innovation in Europe

Italy's 'Green Oscars' for innovative young farmers were awarded in Milan in 2013. The competition offers prizes to inspire new ideas on making sustainable use of the countryside, by exploiting specific local resources.

Award-winning projects included some eclectic but innovative production ideas: caviar from snails; designing and running an 'agri-beach' (which grows most of the foods sold at the beach snack bar); mushrooms grown from coffee grounds; delicious mozzarella cheeses from sheep's milk; or natural cosmetics with zero transport miles.

Many young farmers entered the competition. They devised a series of ideas and innovative and sustainable practices, entirely compatible with a young, inclusive, sustainable and competitive agricultural policy.

1. Is the Commission aware of this competition?

2. Does it know of similar competitions held in other Member States?

3. Does it consider it worthwhile to hold similar events at European level? Would this help young farmers from different Member States to exchange views and best practices? Could it stimulate innovation in the sector?

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

The Commission considers that innovation is a key element for the economic growth and for the sustainable development of different sectors and territories. In fact innovation is a cross-cutting objective for the future Rural Development Policy and all of its measures, and especially the European Innovation Partnership shall contribute to it.

The Commission is aware of the initiatives that Member States and regions have put in place in order to promote innovation in the agricultural sector and in rural areas and certainly welcomes all these initiatives. New ideas for the sustainable use of local resources shall be encouraged.

The Commission considers worthwhile to hold this type of events at European level and this is why in the proposal for the 2014-2020 Rural Development Policy the Commission introduced a prize for innovative and local cooperation in rural areas. However, during the negotiation on the CAP reform, the co-legislators did not agree to introduce a prize for innovative and local cooperation in rural areas.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003176/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Internet delle cose e lotta ai cambiamenti climatici

La lotta contro i cambiamenti climatici è uno degli obiettivi della politica ambientale europea; gli strumenti messi sinora al servizio di questo obiettivo sono notevoli, ma forse non ancora sufficienti, fino a quando non si riuscirà raggiungere un maggiore consenso internazionale sulla questione.

Oggi, tuttavia, l'innovazione tecnologica permette di usufruire di strumenti sempre nuovi per ridurre le emissioni inquinanti e rafforzare la lotta contro i cambiamenti climatici condotta nel quotidiano da ogni cittadino europeo. Un ruolo chiave è certamente quello svolto dalla cosiddetta «Internet delle cose», che sviluppa macchinari intelligenti in grado di dialogare tra loro e di scambiarsi informazioni per ottimizzare l'efficienza energetica e ridurre i livelli di inquinamento. Le autovetture interconnesse sarebbero in grado, ad esempio, di indicare le condizioni di traffico su una determinata tratta, segnalando ad altri veicoli percorsi alternativi in caso di congestione dei flussi automobilistici.

Uno studio realizzato da una nota ONG che si occupa di riduzione delle emissioni di gas serra ha stimato che la diffusione di sistemi di comunicazione da un macchinario all'altro (machine-to-machine) nei settori dell'energia, dell'edilizia e agricolo potrebbe portare a una riduzione delle emissioni di gas a effetto serra di sino a 9,1 miliardi di tonnellate di CO_2 l'anno, cioè ben oltre le soglie di riduzione calcolate dalle Nazioni unite.

Lo sviluppo di macchinari interconnessi potrebbe anche dare nuovo slancio alla produzione industriale, puntando sull'innovazione e su manodopera altamente qualificata quali strumenti di crescita.

In merito a quanto detto, può la Commissione chiarire:

1. in quale misura i macchinari interconnessi sono diffusi sul mercato europeo?

2. A quanto ammontano gli investimenti europei in materia di sviluppo dell'applicazione pratica dell'Internet delle cose?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(14 maggio 2014)

I dispositivi interconnessi stanno proliferando sul mercato europeo. In molti settori di applicazione gli aspetti legati all'azione contro i cambiamenti climatici acquisiscono sempre maggiore rilevanza. Citiamo un esempio: considerato che l'Europa conta 250 milioni circa di alloggi, nell'UE sono imputabili agli edifici il 40 % del consumo energetico e il 36 % delle emissioni di CO_2. Risparmi energetici sono possibili grazie ai sistemi di gestione dell'energia nell'edilizia (BEMS), la cui diffusione è tuttavia ostacolata oggi da barriere di costo per la connessione di sensori, apparecchiature e attuatori. La Commissione ha recentemente avviato uno studio sull'interoperabilità delle apparecchiature intelligenti nell'internet delle cose (SMART 2013/0077), i cui risultati confluiranno nell'opera di normazione dell'ETSI per accrescere le economie di scala e accelerare la diffusione sul mercato.

Benché la tecnologia sia disponibile, il numero di veicoli connessi è ancora limitato. Su richiesta della Commissione europea, gli organismi di normazione ETSI e CEN hanno annunciato nel febbraio 2014 la prima serie di norme finalizzate all'interoperabilità per la comunicazione tra veicoli e tra veicoli e infrastruttura. Sono stati altresì avviati i lavori sulla seconda serie. La Commissione europea ha inoltre previsto in Orizzonte 2020 inviti specifici a presentare proposte di ricerca e innovazione nei sistemi cooperativi di trasporto intelligente e nell'automazione dei veicoli.

In aggiunta al volume in continua crescita degli investimenti del settore, l'UE finanzia attività europee di ricerca sull'internet delle cose ([1]) nell'intento di vincere la sfida di una sua evoluzione in una rete di piattaforme che ospitino dispositivi e oggetti connessi, a sostegno di ambienti, imprese e servizi intelligenti. Uno sviluppo in questo senso contribuirà altresì all'evoluzione verso piattaforme e sistemi aperti che sostengano applicazioni multiple.

([1]) Il finanziamento diretto dell'UE ammonterà a circa 80 milioni di euro nel PQ7 e a 51 milioni di euro nel secondo invito del programma di lavoro 2014-15 di Orizzonte 2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003176/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: The Internet of Things and action against climate change

Action against climate change is a priority of European environmental policy. The resources now allocated to it are considerable, though perhaps not yet enough. Greater international consensus is needed on the issue.

Meanwhile, innovations in technology are placing new means at the disposal of every European citizen in the daily effort to reduce the pollutant emissions causing climate change. The 'Internet of Things' definitely plays a key role. This consists of intelligent devices that exchange information to improve energy efficiency and reduce pollution levels. For example, interconnected cars could monitor traffic conditions on a stretch of road and suggest that other vehicles take alternative routes in case of jams.

A well-known NGO, engaged in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, has estimated that greater use of machine-to-machine communication systems in the energy, construction and agricultural sectors could cut annual greenhouse gas emissions by up to 9.1 billion tonnes of CO_2 — well beyond UN reduction targets.

The development of interlinked devices could also revive industrial production, with the emphasis on innovation and a highly qualified workforce as drivers of growth.

1. How widespread are interconnected devices on the European market?

2. How much is Europe investing in the practical development of the Internet of Things?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 May 2014)

The number of interconnected devices on the European market is proliferating. In many application areas, the aspects linked to action against climate change are increasingly relevant. As an example, with around 250 million dwellings in Europe, buildings are responsible for 40% of the EU's energy consumption and 36% of its CO_2 emissions. Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS) can achieve energy savings, but the uptake of BEMS is at present hindered by cost barriers at connecting sensors, appliances and actuators. The Commission has recently launched a study on the interoperability of Smart Appliances in the Internet of Things (SMART 2013/0077). Its deliverables will be used as input to the ETSI standardisation work, to increase economies of scale and to speed up the market uptake.

The number of connected vehicles is still limited, although the technologies are available. In February 2014, on the request of the European Commission, the standardisation organisations ETSI and CEN announced the first set of standards to ensure interoperability for communication between cars and between cars and infrastructure. Work on the second set of standards has started. Moreover, the European Commission has defined specific calls in H2020 for research and innovation proposals for cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems and for vehicle automation.

The EU is funding European IoT research ([1]), adding to the ever increasing amount of industrial investments, addressing the challenge to deliver an IoT extended into a web of platforms for connected devices and objects supporting smart environments, businesses and services. This will also help to move towards open systems and platforms that support multiple applications.

([1]) Direct EU funding will reach EUR 80 million in FP7 and 51 EUR million in the 2nd call of WP 2014-15 under H2020.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003177/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Nuovo studio sulla lotta contro il virus di Marburg

Il virus di Marburg è un virus proveniente dall'Africa e provoca una febbre emorragica drammatica, con un tasso di mortalità attestato intorno al 90 %. I principali sintomi della malattia sono forti emicranie, dolori muscolari diffusi e una sensazione di malessere generale, accompagnata da febbre alta. A queste seguono poi diverse emorragie in diverse parti del corpo, per poi portare la vittima alla morte, il tutto nell'arco di poco più di una settimana.

Il virus è ancora considerato incurabile, motivo per cui alcuni ricercatori di un'università statunitense stanno studiando il modello di crescita del virus, per sviluppare di conseguenza inibitori efficaci. Lo studio ha portato a scoprire che una proteina normalmente atta a proteggere le cellule dallo stress ambientale (Keap1) permetterebbe al virus di vivere più a lungo e replicarsi. Studiando l'interazione tra il virus VP24 e la proteina Keap1 sarà possibile inibirla e quindi rallentare la replicazione del virus, inibendo e forse impendendone l'azione letale.

In merito alla lotta contro questo virus, può la Commissione chiarire quanto segue:

1. In Europa sono stati condotti studi sullo stesso virus?

2. Qual è l'incidenza del virus Marburg in Europa e quale il suo tasso di mortalità?

3. Ritiene che l'aumento della frequenza dei viaggi di cittadini europei ed extra-europei tra le due sponde del Mediterraneo possa incrementare l'incidenza del virus nell'UE?

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

1. Dopo la scoperta del virus di Marburg, molti studi su di esso sono stati condotti in Europa, in particolare per comprendere i suoi meccanismi patologici ed esplorare nuovi approcci nel trattamento dell'infezione in modelli animali ([1]).

2. Solo in un caso, nei Paesi Bassi nel 2008, è noto che l'infezione da virus di Marburg è stata importata in Europa. Il paziente era un turista che era stato infettato in Uganda dopo aver visitato una caverna abitata da pipistrelli, che sono portatori del virus di Marburg. Il paziente è deceduto.

3. La Commissione non prevede che l'intensificarsi dei viaggi tra Europa e Africa avrà un impatto significativo sulla presenza del virus di Marburg nell'Unione, anche se non è impossibile escludere casi importati come quello sopra menzionato. Specifici siti nell'Africa centrale e orientale sono stati identificati come potenziali fonti d'infezione. I turisti, così come gli operatori del turismo, devono essere ben consapevoli dei rischi derivanti dall'esposizione nelle caverne abitate da pipistrelli, in modo tale da adottare misure in grado di minimizzare il rischio d'infezione.

([1]) Forty-five years of Marburg virus research (quarantacinque anni di ricerca sul virus di Marburg). Viruses. 1° ottobre 2012; 4(10):1878-927. doi: 10.3390/v4101878.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003177/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: New study of Marburg virus inhibition

Marburg virus, which originates in Africa, causes a dramatic haemorrhagic fever, and has a mortality rate of around 90%. The disease's main symptoms are severe headache, diffuse muscular pain, general malaise and high fever, followed by various haemorrhages in different parts of the body. Death ensues in little more than a week.

As the disease is still considered incurable, US-based university researchers decided to study the growth pattern of the virus, with a view to developing effective inhibitors. They discovered that one protein, Keap1, which normally protects the cells from environmental stresses, also enables the virus to live longer and replicate. Further research into the interaction between virus protein VP24 and Keap1 should find ways of slowing the virus's growth and making it less lethal.

In view of the search for inhibitors of this virus, can the Commission clarify:

1. Has Marburg virus been studied in Europe?

2. How common is it in Europe and what is its mortality rate?

3. Does the Commission expect that more frequent travel between Europe and Africa will increase the virus's presence in the EU?

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

1. Many studies on the Marburg virus have been conducted particularly in Europe following its discovery, in particular to understand its pathological mechanisms and to explore novel approaches for treating the infection in animal models ([1]).

2. Only one case of Marburg virus infection is known to have been imported into Europe in 2008 in the Netherlands. The patient was a tourist who was infected in Uganda after visiting a cave known to harbour bats, which are reservoirs of Marburg virus. The patient died.

3. The Commission does not expect that the more frequent travelling between Europe and Africa will have a significant impact on the presence of Marburg virus in the Union, although imported cases, as the one previously mentioned, cannot be excluded. Specific sites in Central and East Africa have been identified as potential sources of infection. Tourists, as well as tourist operators, should be aware of the risk of exposure in caves inhabited by bats so as to take measures minimising the risk of infections.

([1]) Forty-five years of Marburg virus research. Viruses. 2012 Oct 1;4(10):1878-927. doi: 10.3390/v4101878.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003178/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Sostegno dell'Unione europea alle vittime dell'incidente di Fukushima

A tre anni dall'incidente della centrale nucleare di Fukushima, gli effetti delle radiazioni sulle aree circostanti obbligano ancora i cittadini giapponesi delle città limitrofe ad adottare misure di protezione, come mascherine respiratorie o l'interdizione di alcune aree.

Talvolta queste misure non sono sufficienti, tanto che nella prefettura di Fukushima la percentuale di bambini affetti da cancro alla tiroide è molto al di sopra della media nazionale e un aumento costante dei casi è stato registrato negli ultimi mesi.

In merito all'incidente di Fukushima e le sue conseguenze di medio e lungo periodo sulla popolazione, può la Commissione chiarire se l'Unione ha disposto aiuti specifici, di natura economica o tecnica, per prevenire o rimediare gli effetti negativi sulla popolazione, come quelli sopra descritti?

Risposta di Kristalina Georgieva a nome della Commissione
(15 maggio 2014)

Subito dopo l'incidente di Fukushima, il governo giapponese ha chiesto l'aiuto del meccanismo di protezione civile dell'Unione europea, coordinato dalla direzione generale per gli Aiuti umanitari e la protezione civile (DG ECHO) della Commissione. In risposta a questa richiesta, entro la fine di aprile 2011 sono state fornite attraverso il meccanismo 400 tonnellate di assistenza in natura, convogliata mediante voli coordinati dal Centro di informazione e monitoraggio della Commissione, successivamente ribattezzato Centro di coordinamento della risposta alle emergenze. 11 degli Stati che partecipano al meccanismo hanno fornito assistenza in natura (coperte, letti, acqua in bottiglia), che non ha ovviato alle conseguenze a medio-lungo termine della catastrofe.

La DG ECHO ha inoltre erogato un contributo di 10 milioni di EUR a favore della Croce Rossa giapponese per sostenere le operazioni di soccorso in generale.

Il Giappone procede attualmente al campionamento dell'acqua di mare, del fitoplancton e delle particelle in sospensione nell'Oceano Pacifico. Visto che il campionamento avviene in tutto il Pacifico, le concentrazioni di attività sono molto basse e le misurazioni richiedono tecniche speciali a basso background. Per questi studi occorrono misurazioni presso il laboratorio sotterraneo HADES del Centro comune di ricerca (CCR) della Commissione europea e sono stati misurati diversi campioni. Le misurazioni servono a realizzare la mappatura della corrente oceanica, a studiare l'assimilazione orale attraverso la catena alimentare e a quantificare meglio il rilascio di radioattività da Fukushima. Il CCR contribuisce anche alla certificazione del materiale di riferimento per il riso semigreggio, utilizzando la spettrometria gamma del tipo low level, in collaborazione con la società giapponese per la chimica analitica, l'istituto nazionale di metrologia del Giappone e l'istituto nazionale per la ricerca alimentare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003178/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: EU support for victims of the Fukushima accident

Three years after the incident at Fukushima nuclear power station in Japan, the effects of radiation on the surrounding area are still obliging residents of nearby towns to take protective measures, such as wearing breathing masks and establishing no-go areas.

Sometimes these measures are not enough. In Fukushima prefecture, the percentage of children with thyroid cancer is well above the national average, and has risen steadily in recent months.

Has the EU provided specific economic or technical aid to prevent or remedy the Fukushima accident's negative medium and long-term effects, described above, on the population?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2014)

In the immediate aftermath of the Fukushima accident, the Japanese government addressed a request for assistance to the Community Civil Protection Mechanism, coordinated by the European Commission, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). In response, by the end of April 2011, a total of 400 tons of in-kind assistance were channelled through the Mechanism, with flights coordinated by the then Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) of the Commission (currently transformed into the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, ERCC). A total of 11 participating States to the Mechanism contributed with in-kind assistance (blankets, beds, bottled water). This assistance did not cover medium and long-term effects of the disaster.

Furthermore DG ECHO provided a contribution of EUR 10 million to the Japanese Red Cross to support the overall relief effort.

Japan is now sampling sea-water, phyto-plankton and suspended particles in the Pacific Ocean. As the sampling takes place all over the Pacific, the activity concentrations are very low and special low-background techniques are necessary for the measurements. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre's (JRC) measurements in the underground laboratory HADES are necessary for these studies and several samples have been measured. The measurements serve to map the ocean current, to study uptake in the food chain and to make better estimates of the total release of radioactivity from Fukushima.The JRC also contributes to certification of Brown rice reference material using low-level gamma-ray spectrometry, in cooperation with the Japan Society for Analytical Chemistry, the National Metrology Institute of Japan and the National Food Research Institute.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003179/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Tasso di disoccupazione dei giovani laureati

Sono di recente pubblicazione nuovi dati sui livelli di occupazione dei laureati italiani, basati su sessantaquattro atenei italiani e circa 450mila studenti.

Innanzitutto è stato registrato un calo del 30 % dei diciannovenni che si sono iscritti a un programma di studi di livello universitario, un dato gravissimo se si prende in considerazione l'obiettivo 2020 del 40 % di laureati nella popolazione tra i 30 e i 34 anni: ad oggi solo il 21 % degli italiani tra i 25 e i 34 anni ha un titolo di istruzione di terzo livello.

Inoltre, per quanto riguarda la percentuale di laureati occupati, il dato è calato rispetto al 2008, inizio della crisi economica. così come il livello medio di retribuzione, caduto da 1200 a 1000 euro.

Alla luce di questi dati, può la Commissione:

1. fornire dati in merito alla variazione, a partire dal 2008, del tasso di occupazione dei laureati negli altri Stati membri dell'UE?

2. Chiarire se intende proporre nuove misure per permetter l'effettivo raggiungimento dell'obiettivo 2020 summenzionato?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(19 maggio 2014)

L'Onorevole parlamentare troverà in allegato i tassi di occupazione dei neolaureati (gruppo di età 20-34 anni) nell'UE per gli anni dal 2008 al 2013. Il primo indicatore comprende l'istruzione secondaria superiore, post-secondaria, non terziaria e terziaria (livelli ISCED ([1]) 3-6) e corrisponde al parametro di Istruzione e Formazione 2020; il secondo indicatore comprende unicamente l'istruzione terziaria (livelli ISCED 5-6).

In base alle informazioni attualmente disponibili e secondo quanto indicato nella comunicazione della Commissione «Bilancio della Strategia europea 2020» del marzo 2014 ([2]), l'obiettivo Europa 2020 di raggiungere un livello di istruzione più elevato (40 % del gruppo di età 30-34 anni in possesso di un diploma di terzo livello) è considerato raggiungibile per l'UE nel suo insieme. Dal momento che l'istruzione rientra nell'ambito di responsabilità esclusiva degli Stati membri, spetta ai governi nazionali e agli istituti di istruzione superiore determinare le modalità per il perseguimento di questo obiettivo. L'agenda UE sulla modernizzazione dell'istruzione superiore ([3]) contiene linee guida in materia e sottolinea l'importanza di combinare diverse misure: aumento delle iscrizioni, ove possibile da una base di studenti più ampia; migliorare i tassi di completamento degli studi; migliorare la qualità e la pertinenza dei programmi di studio al fine di garantire che i laureati dispongano delle più solide basi possibili per effettuare con successo la transizione verso un impiego di qualità.

([1]) International Standard Classification for Education.
([2]) COM(2014) 130 final/2.
([3]) COM(2011)567.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003179/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Unemployment rate among young graduates

New figures on employment levels among Italian graduates have recently been published, based on 64 Italian universities and about 450 000 students.

Firstly, there has been a 30% drop in the number of nineteen-year-olds enrolled on a university-level study programme. This is very bad news, when you consider that the target for 2020 is for 40% of the 30-34 age group to have a degree. At the moment, only 21% of Italians aged between 25 and 34 have a higher-education qualification.

Furthermore, the percentage of graduates in work has fallen since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, as has average pay, which is down from EUR 1 200 to EUR 1 000.

In the light of these figures, can the Commission:

1. Provide figures on the variation in the employment rate among graduates in the other EU Member States since 2008?

2. Clarify whether it is intending to propose new measures to make it possible to reach the 2020 target mentioned above?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(19 May 2014)

The Honourable Member will find enclosed the employment rates of recent graduates (20-34 age group) in the EU for the years 2008 to 2013. The first indicator covers upper secondary, post-secondary, non-tertiary and tertiary education (ISCED [1]) levels 3-6) and corresponds to the Education and Training 2020 Benchmark; the second indicator covers tertiary education only (ISCED levels 5-6).

Based upon currently available information and as set out in the Commission's Communication taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy of March 2014 ([2]), the Europe 2020 target on higher educational attainment (40% of the 30-34 age group to have a third-level degree or diploma) is considered to be achievable for the EU as a whole. Education being the exclusive responsibility of Member States, it is for national governments and higher education institutions to set out their path to achieving this goal. The EU Agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education ([3]) provides guidance in this respect. It stresses the importance of combining several measures: increased enrolment, including from a more diverse student base; improving completion rates; and improving the quality and relevance of study programmes to ensure that graduates have the best possible foundation from which to make the transition to quality employment.

([1]) International Standard Classification for Education.
([2]) COM(2014) 130 final/2.
([3]) COM(2011) 567.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003184/14
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. März 2014)

Betrifft: ADHS

Eines von 20 Schulkindern in Europa leidet vermutlich unter ADHS. Die Probleme, die dies verursacht, können vielfältig sein, besonders im Bildungsbereich.

1. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis von dieser hohen ADHS-Rate in der Europäischen Union? Falls ja, mit welchen Strategien werden den Mitgliedstaaten die bestmöglich anzuwendenden Methoden empfohlen?

2. Ist die Kommission bereit, die Entwicklung von Strategien zu unterstützen, die die Mitgliedstaaten bei ihrem Vorgehen unterstützen sollen, damit die Belastung für diejenigen, die unter ADHS leiden, sowie für die Gesellschaft insgesamt im Zaum gehalten und möglichst gering gehalten wird?

3. Sind der Kommission die Kosten in der Gesundheitsfürsorge sowie die sozialen Kosten im Zusammenhang mit ADHS bei Kindern und Erwachsenen bekannt? Falls nicht, ist die Kommission bereit, eine Studie zur Analysierung dieser Kosten in die Wege zu leiten und den Mitgliedstaaten Empfehlungen an die Hand zu geben?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(11. Juni 2014)

Die Kommission weiß, dass nach Schätzungen 5 bis 6 % der Kinder an der Aufmerksamkeitsdefizit-/Hyperaktivitätsstörung (ADHS) leiden, wobei mehr Jungen betroffen sind als Mädchen.

2010 hat die Europäische Arzneimittel-Agentur eine Leitlinie zur klinischen Erforschung von Arzneimitteln für die Behandlung von ADHS (Guideline on clinical investigation of medicinal products for the treatment of attentional deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) ([1])) herausgegeben.

Der Aufbau und die Bereitstellung von Gesundheitsleistungen und medizinischer Versorgung unterliegt in allen Bereichen, auch in Bezug auf die Aufmerksamkeitsdefizit-/Hyperaktivitätsstörung, der Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten. Zur Unterstützung der Mitgliedstaaten hat die Kommission im vergangenen Jahr eine Gemeinsame Aktion für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden ([2]) initiiert, an der 25 Mitgliedstaaten teilnehmen. Hierzu gehört auch das Arbeitspaket „Psychische Gesundheit und Schulen", das die Möglichkeit bietet, Fragen rund um ADHS aufzugreifen.

Die Kosten, die dem Gesundheits- und Sozialwesen durch die Aufmerksamkeitsdefizit-/Hyperaktivitätsstörung schätzungsweise entstehen, wurden in zahlreichen Studien ermittelt, etwa in dem Bericht „Social cohesion for mental well-being among adolescents" (WHO/HBSC Forum 2007) ([3]) und der 2011 von A. Gustavsson und anderen vorgelegten Studie „Cost of disorders of the brain in Europe 2010" ([4]). Eine Gruppe von Fachleuten aus dem Vereinigten Königreich, Irland und den Niederlanden veröffentlichte außerdem voriges Jahr ein Arbeitspapier mit dem Titel „ADHD: making the invisible visible" ([5]).

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2010/08/WC500095686.pdf
([2]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/
([3]) http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/84623/E91921.pdf
([4]) European Neuropsychopharmacology (2011) 21, S. 718 ff.
([5]) http://www.europeanbraincouncil.org/pdfs/ADHD%20White%20Paper_15Apr13.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003184/14
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: ADHD

One in 20 schoolchildren in Europe may be affected by ADHD. The difficulties this causes are manifold, especially in the educational sector.

1. Is the Commission aware of this high rate of ADHD in the European Union? If so, what strategies are employed for advising the Member States on the best practices to follow?

2. Is the Commission willing to support the development of strategies to guide the Member States in their procedures in order to manage and minimise the burden on ADHD sufferers and on society in general?

3. Is the Commission aware of the health costs as well as social costs associated with ADHD in children and in adults? If not, is the Commission willing to launch a study to analyse these costs as well as issue recommendations to the Member States?

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

The Commission is aware of estimations according to which about 5-6% of children experience an attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, with more boys than girls being affected.

In 2010, the European Medicines Agency issued a 'Guideline on clinical investigation of medicinal products for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)' ([1]).

The organisation and delivery of health services and medical care in all fields including attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder — falls under the responsibility of Member States. To support Member States, last year the Commission launched a Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being ([2]), involving 25 Member States. This includes a work package on 'Mental Health and Schools', under which issues around attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder can be addressed.

The health and social costs caused by attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder were estimated by a number of studies, including the report 'Social cohesion for mental well-being among adolescents' from the WHO/HBSC Forum 2007 ([3]) and the study 'Cost of disorders of the brain in Europe 2010' by A. Gustavsson et al of 2011 ([4]). In addition, a group of experts from the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands published last year a paper on 'ADHD: making the invisible visible' ([5]).

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2010/08/WC500095686.pdf
([2]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/
([3]) http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/84623/E91921.pdf
([4]) European Neuropsychopharmacology (2011) 21, 718-779.
([5]) http://www.europeanbraincouncil.org/pdfs/ADHD%20White%20Paper_15Apr13.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003185/14
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. März 2014)

Betrifft: Psychische Erkrankungen im Bildungssektor

Bis zu 20 % der Kinder in Europa leiden möglicherweise unter einer psychischen Störung.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser hohe Prozentsatz bekannt? Wenn ja, welche Strategien sind vorgesehen, um die Mitgliedstaaten dahin gehend zu beraten, wie die betroffenen Kinder, Familien und Schulen unterstützt werden können, damit alle Kinder ihre Ausbildung abschließen und in der Folge ihr Potential voll entfalten können?

2. Werden psychische Probleme im Bildungssektor nicht behandelt, so entstehen durch vorzeitigen Schulabbruch und geringe Leistungsfähigkeit Folgekosten. Liegen der Kommission Schätzungen dieser Kosten vor? Wenn ja, kann die Kommission für jeden Mitgliedstaat detaillierte Angaben machen?

3. Ist der Kommission bekannt, ob der Bildungs- und der Gesundheitssektor in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten in Bezug auf psychische Gesundheit zusammenarbeiten? Wenn ja, welche Struktur hat diese Zusammenarbeit EU-weit? Besteht die Möglichkeit, dass als Anleitung für alle Mitgliedstaaten Leitlinien für bewährte Verfahren bei einer derartigen Zusammenarbeit erlassen werden?

Antwort von Androulla Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(28. Mai 2014)

Gemäß den Artikeln 165 und 168 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union liegt die Verantwortung für die Lehrinhalte und die Gestaltung der Bildungssysteme, für gesundheitspolitische Maßnahmen und für die Organisation und Erbringung von Gesundheits- und medizinischen Dienstleistungen ausschließlich in der Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten. Die Kommission erhebt keine Daten zu den von der Frau Abgeordneten angesprochenen Fragen.

Durch die offene Methode der Koordinierung unterstützt die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten in ihren Bemühungen zur Verbesserung der Bildungssysteme, und zwar auch im Hinblick auf die besonderen Bedürfnisse von Kindern mit psychischen Problemen. So verdeutlicht beispielsweise der vorläufige Bericht der Sachverständigengruppe über die mathematische, wissenschaftliche und technologische Bildung die Notwendigkeit, Lehrkräfte und Unterstützungspersonal für den Umgang mit den besonderen Bedürfnissen von Kindern mit psychischen Problemen zu motivieren und zu schulen.

Außerdem behandelt die Kommission das Thema psychische Gesundheit und psychische Störungen im Rahmen des Europäischen Pakts für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden. Im Zuge der Gemeinsamen Aktion für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden (2013-2016) ([1]), die aus dem EU-Gesundheitsprogramm gefördert wird, entsteht unter Mitwirkung von 25 Mitgliedstaaten ein Arbeitspaket „Psychische Gesundheit und Schulen“, das Empfehlungen für Kooperationskonzepte zwischen dem Gesundheitssektor und Schulen zum Umgang mit psychischen Problemen entwickelt.

([1]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003185/14
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Mental health problems in the educational sector

Up to 20% of European children may suffer from a mental health condition.

1. Is the Commission aware of this high rate? If so, what strategies are in place to advise the Member States on how to support the children, families and schools concerned, so that all children complete their education and subsequently reach their full potential?

2. The cost of non-management of mental health problems in the educational health sector translates into early school-leaving and low achievement. Does the Commission have an estimate of these costs? If so, could the Commission provide details for each Member State?

3. Does the Commission know whether the educational sector and the health sector cooperate in the different Member States with regard to mental health? If so, how is this cooperation structured across the EU? Is there any possibility that guidelines for best practice in such cooperation will be drafted to advise all Member States?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 May 2014)

In accordance with Articles 165 and 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems, for health policies and for organising and delivering health services and medical care rests entirely with Member States. The Commission does not collect data on the issues raised by the Honourable Member.

Through the Open Method of Coordination, the Commission supports Member States in their efforts to improve their education systems. Addressing the special needs of children with mental health problems is part of this process. For example, the preliminary report of the expert group on Maths, Science and Technology Education points to the need to motivate and train teachers as well as support personnel to address the specific needs of children with mental health problems.

In addition, the Commission addresses the issue of mental health and mental disorders through its work under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being. Within the framework of the Joint Action 'Mental Health and Well-being (2013-2016)' ([1]) under the EU Health Programme, a work package on 'Mental Health and Schools' involving 25 Member States is developing recommendations for collaborative approaches between the health sector and schools in order to address mental health issues based on identified good practices.

([1]) http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003187/14
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Calibro delle armi 9x19 (parabellum)

Con il decreto legislativo n. 121 del 29 settembre 2013 concernente l'attuazione della direttiva 2008/51/CE, l'Italia non ha modificato la legge n. 110 del 1975 la quale, all'articolo 2, classifica come esclusivamente militare il calibro 9x19, che è comunemente ritenuto calibro comune da sparo negli altri paesi europei.

Questa classificazione delle armi corte a calibro 9x19 comporta notevoli problemi e costi supplementari per la ricameratura delle armi provenienti da altri paesi le quali, secondo le leggi italiane, debbono essere ricamerate con calibro 9x21, una modifica che non comporta peraltro un cambiamento di prestazione in favore di una maggiore sicurezza.

Alla luce di quanto sopra:

1. ritiene la Commissione che la mancata conformità rispetto agli ordinamenti degli altri Stati membri possa rappresentare una barriera al commercio interno all'Unione?

2. Ritiene la Commissione che tale restrizione, non motivata da evidenti questioni di sicurezza, vada contro l'obiettivo della direttiva 2008/51/CE di semplificare e uniformare le leggi in materia tra gli Stati membri dell'Unione?

3. Ritiene la Commissione che tale limitazione costituisca «de facto» una barriera alla libera circolazione interna all'Unione e un ostacolo alla possibilità di organizzare sul territorio italiano gare ed eventi sportivi nelle discipline del tiro a segno?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(19 maggio 2014)

La Commissione concorda sul fatto che la mancanza di una normativa armonizzata tra gli Stati membri possa ostacolare gli scambi commerciali all'interno dell'UE. Per tale motivo la direttiva 2008/51/CE (direttiva sulle armi da fuoco) costituisce una misura di accompagnamento per il completamento del mercato interno. In cambio di una certa libertà di circolazione delle armi da fuoco tra gli Stati membri la direttiva integra nella legislazione europea garanzie di sicurezza specifiche adatte a questo tipo di prodotto.

La Commissione ricorda tuttavia che la direttiva prescrive un livello minimo di armonizzazione, il che permette agli Stati membri di adottare misure più rigorose purché siano conformi alle disposizioni del trattato, in particolare ai principi di proporzionalità e di sussidiarietà. Tale discrezionalità riguarda anche le categorie di armi da fuoco e si applica alle armi calibro 9x19. In linea con il principio di armonizzazione minima gli Stati membri possono, nella propria legislazione nazionale, promuovere un'arma a una categoria superiore. In altri termini, possono riqualificarla dalla categoria C alla categoria B o dalla categoria B alla categoria A (armi proibite — esclusivamente ad uso militare).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003187/14
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: 9x19 (Parabellum) weapons calibre

With legislative decree No 121 of 29 September 2013 on the implementation of Directive 2008/51/EC, Italy did not amend law No 110 of 1975, Article 2 of which classifies the calibre 9x19 as for military use only whereas it is generally considered to be an ordinary calibre of cartridge in other European countries.

This classification of 9x19 calibre handguns creates significant problems and entails additional costs for the conversion of weapons from other countries which, under Italian law, must be converted to 9x21, a change that does not, however, affect performance in terms of enhancing safety.

In light of the above:

1. Does the Commission believe that the lack of consistency with the laws of the other Member States could constitute a barrier to trade within the EU?

2. Does the Commission consider that this restriction, which is not motivated by any obvious safety concerns, goes against the aim of Directive 2008/51/EC, namely to simplify and standardise laws on this subject among EU Member States?

3. Does the Commission agree that this restriction in fact constitutes a barrier to freedom of movement within the EU and stands in the way of target shooting competitions and sporting events being held in Italy?

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

The Commission agrees that the lack of harmonised legislation amongst the EU Member States could constitute a barrier to trade within the EU. For this reason, Directive 2008/51/EC (Firearms Directive) constituted an accompanying measure for the completion of the internal market. In exchange for a certain freedom of movement for firearms from one Member State to another, it integrated into European law specific safety guarantees suited to this type of product.

However, the Commission recalls that the directive provides a minimum harmonisation, which allows the Member States to adopt stricter measures, provided of course they comply with the rules of the Treaty, in particular the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. This discretion also regards the categories of firearms and applies to 9x19 weapons calibre. In line with the minimum harmonisation principle, Member States can in their national legislation 'upgrade' a weapon, in other words they can raise it from category C to category B, or from category B to category A (prohibited weapons — military use only).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003188/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(18 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Pomoc humanitarna dla Sudanu

Dwa miesiące po rozpoczęciu konfliktu w Sudanie Południowym, prawie milion ludzi opuściło domy, a 10 tysięcy nie żyje. ONZ wzywa do pomocy 3,2 milionom ludzi, którzy są bezpośrednio zagrożeni skutkami konfliktu. W Addis Abebie podpisano zawieszenie broni między rządem Sudanu Południowego, a zbuntowanymi oddziałami. Jednak nie spowodowało to zakończenia walk. Organizacja Lekarze Bez Granic alarmuje – szerzą się choroby takie jak odra, ludzie są niedożywieni. Poza stolicą trudno uzyskać jest żywność. Wiele magazynów organizacji humanitarnych z żywością zostało obrabowanych. ONZ zaapelował o 1,27 mld dol. na pomoc dla ludzi bezpośrednio zagrożonych konfliktem.

1. Czy Unia Europejska przewiduje pomoc humanitarną dla ludzi najbardziej dotkniętych konfliktem?

2. Czy Komisja na bieżąco monitoruje rozwój sytuacji w Sudanie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Kristalinę Georgijewą w imieniu Komisji
(22 maja 2014 r.)

Na początku 2014 r. Komisja Europejska przeznaczyła 50 mln euro na pomoc humanitarną, aby odpowiedzieć na najpilniejsze potrzeby ludności najbardziej dotkniętej wybuchem ostatniego kryzysu w Sudanie Południowym. Największy nacisk kładzie się na ochronę ludności cywilnej, zwalczanie niedożywienia i natychmiastową pomoc medyczną w celu uniknięcia epidemii. Jednocześnie – by uwzględnić zmieniające się potrzeby – szybko dostosowano kilka projektów realizowanych w ramach budżetu na 2013 r. Ponadto w celu wzmocnienia swej reakcji na ten kryzys humanitarny, Komisja Europejska przeznaczyła z Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju 45 mln EUR. To dodatkowe wsparcie zaspokoi potrzeby blisko miliona przesiedleńców wewnętrznych w Sudanie Południowym (30 mln EUR), jak również 300 000 osób, które znalazły schronienie w państwach sąsiednich (15 mln EUR).

Unijne działania humanitarne uzupełniane są od 2011 r. działaniami UE na rzecz rozwoju i współpracy w Sudanie Południowym, o łącznym budżecie 285 mln EUR przeznaczonym na opiekę zdrowotną, edukację, bezpieczeństwo żywnościowe i sprawowanie rządów. Obecnie działania na rzecz rozwoju są ponownie dostosowywane, by skupiać się na odporności na kryzys i lepszym łączeniu pomocy doraźnej, odbudowy i rozwoju w celu zmaksymalizowania oddziaływania funduszy zarówno w zakresie pomocy humanitarnej, jak i rozwoju. Ponadto, by wspomóc stabilizację i budowanie zaufania w strefach dotkniętych konfliktem, przygotowywany jest pakiet o wartości 10 mln EUR, finansowany w ramach Instrumentu na rzecz przyczyniania się do Stabilności i Pokoju.

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca jest poinformowana o kryzysie i wspiera wysiłki mediacyjne Międzyrządowego Organu ds. Rozwoju.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003188/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Humanitarian aid to South Sudan

Two months after conflict erupted in South Sudan, almost one million people have fled their homes and 10 000 have been killed. The UN has appealed for help for the 3.2 million people who are directly affected by the conflict. A cease-fire agreement was signed in Addis Ababa between the South Sudanese Government and rebel military units. However, this did not bring an end to hostilities. *Médecins Sans Frontières* has warned that diseases such as measles are spreading and that people are malnourished. Outside the capital city, food is hard to come by. Many food warehouses used by humanitarian organisations have been looted. The UN has appealed for USD 1.27 billion in aid for people directly affected by the conflict.

1. Is the European Union planning to offer humanitarian aid to those most affected by the conflict?

2. Is the Commission following developments in South Sudan closely?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2014)

In early 2014 the European Commission allocated EUR 50 million in humanitarian aid to respond to most urgent needs of those most affected by the eruption of the latest crisis in South Sudan. The main focus is on protection of civilians, fighting malnutrition and emergency health actions to avoid epidemics. In parallel, several projects implemented under the 2013 budget were swiftly refocused to cater for the changed needs. In addition, the European Commission has allocated EUR 45 million from the European Development Fund to strengthen its response to the humanitarian crisis. This additional support will address the needs of the nearly 1 million internally displaced persons within South Sudan (EUR 30 million), as well as of those 300 000 who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries (EUR 15 million).

The EU's humanitarian efforts are being complemented by the EU development cooperation portfolio in South Sudan, totalling EUR 285 million in health, education, food security and governance since 2011 to date. Currently, the development portfolio is being re-adjusted to focus on resilience and link more coherently relief, rehabilitation and development to maximise the impact of both humanitarian and development funds. Further a EUR 10 million package funded through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) is also being prepared to contribute to stabilisation and confidence-building in areas affected by the conflict.

The HR/VP is aware of the crisis and supports the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003189/14
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 martie 2014)

Subiect: Anticoncepționalele pot crește riscul de scleroză multiplă

Femeile care iau anticoncepționale prezintă un risc cu până la 50% mai mare de scleroză multiplă, conform unor studii realizate de către oamenii de știință de la Institutul de Cercetări al Fundației Kaiser din California.

Cercetătorii americani au identificat 305 femei diagnosticate cu scleroză multiplă, într-un interval de trei ani, și au comparat modul în care foloseau anticoncepționale — în cea mai mare parte o combinație de doi hormoni — cu modul în care luau pilule 3 050 de femei sănătoase. În total, 29% dintre femeile cu scleroză multiplă și 29% dintre femeile sănătoase folosiseră anticoncepționale timp de cel puțin trei luni, în cei trei ani înainte de declanșarea simptomelor. Femeile care luaseră anticoncepționale aveau o probabilitate cu 35% mai mare să se îmbolnăvească decât cele care nu le folosiseră, în timp ce femeile care folosiseră anticoncepționale, dar încetaseră să le utilizeze cu cel puțin o lună înainte de declanșarea simptomelor aveau o probabilitate cu 50% mai mare de a se îmbolnăvi de scleroză multiplă.

Având în vedere faptul că scleroza multiplă este cea mai frecventă afecțiune neurologică handicapantă, ce afectează viețile a peste două milioane de oameni din întreaga lume:

1. Intenționează Comisia să examineze acest studiu recent și să emită un aviz pe această temă?

2. Intenționează Comisia să înceapă o nouă campanie care să aibă ca scop creșterea gradului de conștientizare a ceea ce înseamnă această boală autoimună?

3. Va încuraja în continuare Comisia cooperarea științifică a statelor Uniunii Europene în domeniul cercetării și identificării celor mai bune forme de tratare a acestei afecțiuni?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(13 mai 2014)

1. Conform politicii sale, Comisa Europeană nu comentează proiecte de cercetare sau rapoarte științifice care nu sunt direct legate de activitățile sale de finanțare.

2. Comisia nu are în plan să organizeze o campanie de sensibilizare cu privire la scleroza multiplă, deoarece aceasta este o chestiune care intră în sfera de responsabilitate a statelor membre și a organizațiilor neguvernamentale din domeniu.

3. Orizont 2020 — Programul-cadru pentru cercetare și inovare ([1]) (2014-2020), prin obiectivul „Sănătate, schimbări demografice și bunăstare” din cadrul priorității „Provocări societale”, poate oferi noi oportunități pentru sprijinirea cercetării în domeniul sclerozei multiple. Informații cu privire la oportunitățile de finanțare existente pot fi obținute vizitând portalul pentru participanții la programe de cercetare și inovare. ([2])

Finanțarea UE pentru cercetare se acordă pe baza unor cereri competitive de propuneri și în urma unei evaluări independente *inter pares*.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003189/14
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Contraceptives may increase the risk of multiple sclerosis

Women who take oral contraceptives have up to a 50% higher risk of multiple sclerosis, according to studies carried out by scientists at the Kaiser Foundation Research Institute in California.

The US researchers identified 305 women who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis over a three-year period, and compared their use of oral contraceptives — mainly a combination of two hormones — with that of 3 050 healthy women. In total, 29% of the women with multiple sclerosis and 29% of the healthy women had used oral contraceptives for at least three months in the three years before symptoms began. Women who had used oral contraceptives were 35% more likely to develop the disease than those who did not use them, while women who had used them but had stopped at least one month before symptoms started were 50% more likely to develop multiple sclerosis.

Given that multiple sclerosis is the most common disabling neurological condition, affecting the lives of more than 2 million people across the world:

1. Will the Commission look into this recent study and issue an opinion on the subject?

2. Will the Commission launch a new campaign aimed at raising awareness of theimplications of this autoimmune disease?

3. Will the Commission continue to encourage scientific cooperation between EuropeanUnion countries on research into this disease and identifying the best ways of treating it?

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

1. As a matter of policy, the European Commission does not comment on research projects or scientific reports that do not directly relate to its funding activities.

2. The Commission has no plans to organise a campaign to raise awareness on multiple sclerosis, because this is a matter falling under the responsibility of Member States themselves and of the relevant non-governmental organisations.

3. Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation [1] (2014-2020), through its 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' societal challenge may provide further opportunities to support research on multiple sclerosis. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained at the EC Research and Innovation Participant Portal [2].

EU research funding is granted on the basis of competitive calls for proposals, following an independent peer-review evaluation.

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

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003190/14
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 martie 2014)

Subiect: Batoane de cereale cu arsenic

Mai multe studii, printre care și o analiză publicată în revista de specialitate „Environmental Health Perspectives”, au evidențiat faptul că batoanele de cereale aflate pe piața europeană conțin un nivel ridicat de arsenic.

În aceste produse se află mai ales arsenic anorganic — cel mai periculos pentru sănătate — care se găsește în pânza freatică. Orezul are nevoie de multă apă pentru a crește, ceea ce explică prezența arsenicului în acest aliment și în derivatele lui. De altfel, este foarte probabil ca procesul de contaminare să se fi făcut din cauza adăugării de sirop de orez brun, un edulcorant natural.

Pe termen lung, consumul de alimente care conțin arsenic anorganic este asociat cu probleme precum leziuni ale pielii, boli cardiovasculare și cu unele forme de cancer, informația fiind confirmată și de către Organizația Mondială a Sănătății.

În acest context, are Comisia în vedere realizarea unor studii similare?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(5 mai 2014)

În 2009, Autoritatea Europeană pentru Siguranța Alimentară a adoptat un aviz științific cu privire la arsenul din alimente ([1]). Acest aviz a demonstrat că persoanele care consumă o cantitate mare de orez în Europa (cum ar fi anumite grupuri etnice), precum și consumatorii frecvenți de produse pe bază de alge sunt cu precădere supuși riscului expunerii prin alimentație la arsen anorganic. Întrucât produsele pe bază de orez sunt utilizate frecvent în alimentele de înțărcare pentru sugari, expunerea copiilor la arsen este de asemenea considerată de mare importanță.

Întrucât în aviz se recomandă ca expunerea prin alimentație la arsen anorganic să fie redusă, serviciile Comisiei au desfășurat discuții la nivel UE cu statele membre și cu părțile interesate și la nivel global în Codex Alimentarius. Aceste discuții se concentrează asupra orezului și produselor pe bază de orez și explorează posibilitățile de stabilire a unui nivel mai strict pentru orezul destinat sugarilor și copiilor de vârstă mică.

([1]) Grupul pentru contaminanții din lanțul alimentar al EFSA (CONTAM); Aviz științific cu privire la arsenul din alimente — EFSA Journal 2009; 7(10):1351. [199 pp.].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003190/14
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Arsenic in cereal bars

Several studies, including an analysis published in the specialist journal 'Environmental Health Perspectives', have shown that cereal bars that are to be found on the European market contain a high level of arsenic.

Specifically, these products contain inorganic arsenic — the most dangerous form. This substance is present in the groundwater. Rice needs a large amount of water to grow, which explains the presence of arsenic in rice and its derivatives. In the case of cereal bars, it is highly probable that the contamination occurred through the addition of brown rice syrup, a natural sweetener.

In the long term, the consumption of foods containing inorganic arsenic is linked to problems such as skin lesions, cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer, as has been confirmed by the World Health Organisation.

Is the Commission planning to carry out similar studies?

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

In 2009, the European Food Safety Authority adopted the Scientific Opinion on arsenic in food ([1]). This opinion demonstrated that high consumers of rice in Europe (such as certain ethnic groups) are particularly at risk to dietary exposure of inorganic arsenic as well as high consumers of algae-based products. As rice-based products are often used in weaning foods for infants, exposure of infants to arsenic is further considered of great importance.

As the opinion recommended that dietary exposure to inorganic arsenic should be reduced, the Commission services have engaged discussions at EU level with Member States and stakeholders and at global level in Codex Alimentarius. These discussions focus on rice and rice based products and explore the possibilities of setting a stricter level for rice destined at infants and young children.

([1]) EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM); Scientific Opinion on Arsenic in Food — EFSA Journal 2009; 7(10):1351. [199 pp.].

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003191/14
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 martie 2014)

Subiect: O treime din hrana produsă la nivel global este aruncată

O treime din hrana produsă la nivel global ajunge să fie aruncată, în condițiile în care prețurile internaționale ale produselor alimentare de abia își revin după ce au atins un maxim istoric în anul 2012, iar sute de milioane de persoane de pe mapamond suferă de malnutriție, se arată într-o analiză a economistului spaniol José Cuesta, publicată recent pe site-ul oficial al Băncii Mondiale.

Un cetățean european aruncă, zilnic, echivalentul în hrană a 748 de calorii, adică 37,4% din cantitatea de hrană zilnică recomandată pentru un adult. Cantitatea de hrană irosită la nivel global ar putea acoperi necesarul de alimente al regiunilor în care populațiile suferă de foame, se mai arată în articolul menționat.

În acest context:

1. Ce măsuri intenționează să ia Comisia pentru a preveni risipa de alimente în statele membre?

2. Are de gând Comisia să declare un An european împotriva risipei alimentare în viitorul apropiat?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(12 mai 2014)

În ceea ce privește activitatea Comisiei referitoare la prevenirea risipei de alimente, Comisia îl invită pe stimatul deputat să consulte răspunsurile la întrebările cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-13588/2013, E-014106/2013 și E-001391/2014.

În ceea ce privește posibila declarare în viitor a unui An european împotriva risipei alimentare, Comisia îl invită pe stimatul deputat să consulte răspunsul la întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-001675/2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003191/14
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: One-third of world food production discarded

According to an analytical report by the Spanish economist José Cuesta recently published on the World Bank website, as much as one-third of world food production is being discarded. As a result, hundreds of millions of people in the world remain undernourished, the prices of internationally traded food commodities having only recently dipped from their 2012 historic peak.

The article goes on to point out that daily per capita food wastage in Europe amounts to 748 calories, that is to say 37.4% of the daily recommended adult intake and that the global volume of food discarded could in fact meet the needs of undernourished populations.

In view of this:

1. What steps will the Commission take with a view to preventing food wastage in the Member States?

2. Does it intend to declare a European Year against Food Waste in the near future?

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

Concerning the Commission's work with respect to the prevention of food waste, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its replies to written questions E- 13588/2013, E-014106/2013 and E-001391/2014.

With respect to the possible future declaration of a European Year against Food Waste, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question P-001675/2014.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-003193/14
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 mars 2014)

Objet: VPHR — Déclarations de la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante concernant le boycott d'Israël

La presse européenne a recueilli, le 17 mars, des déclarations de la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité concernant le boycott d'Israël.

Mme Ashton a déclaré que l'Union européenne est opposée à tout boycott d'Israël. «Nous ne voulons pas voir Israël isolé», a-t-elle ajouté.

La campagne BDS (Boycott, désinvestissement, sanctions), lancée en 2005, rencontre un succès grandissant à travers le monde, visant parfois les seuls biens provenant des territoires occupés mais aussi, dans certains cas, tous les produits, entreprises et institutions israéliennes sans discrimination. Le célèbre astrophysicien américain Stephen Hawkins a par exemple refusé l'an dernier de participer à une conférence en Israël.

1. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante connaît-elle la campagne BDS?

2. Est-elle au courant de l'impunité avec laquelle agit Israël contre le peuple palestinien?

3. A-t-elle des propositions à faire pour que cessent les exactions et violations du droit international de la part d'Israël?

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

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a parfaitement connaissance de la campagne BDS.

La position adoptée de longue date par l'UE est que les colonies israéliennes sont illégales au regard du droit international et constituent un obstacle à la paix. L'UE reste fermement opposée aux colonies israéliennes en Palestine et aux activités liées à leur implantation et fait passer ce message auprès de ses homologues israéliens à tous les niveaux ainsi qu'au sein de diverses enceintes internationales ([1]).

Les lignes directrices de l'UE publiées en juillet 2013 mettent en œuvre cette politique, en excluant les colonies israéliennes et les activités liées à leur implantation du bénéfice des programmes de financement de l'UE. La Commission doit donc veiller à ce que les exigences de la législation de l'Union européenne soient intégralement et effectivement mises en œuvre. En outre, le SEAE et les services de la Commission élaborent actuellement des lignes directrices à l'échelle de l'UE sur l'étiquetage afin de mettre en œuvre les conclusions du Conseil des affaires étrangères de mai et décembre 2012. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante, Catherine Ashton, a été vivement encouragée par les États membres à poursuivre les efforts dans ce sens. La mise au point de telles lignes directrices est complexe car la législation de l'UE en la matière est très précise et compliquée. Les consommateurs ont le droit d'être informés de la provenance d'un produit. Il ne faut pas les induire en erreur. Il est en effet fallacieux d'indiquer qu'un produit est «fabriqué en Israël» lorsqu'il est produit dans les colonies israéliennes. Cela n'a rien à voir avec le boycott ou d'autres campagnes.

([1]) http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140111_02_fr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003193/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Comments by Catherine Ashton regarding the boycott of Israel

On 17 March 2014 the European press published comments by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, concerning a boycott of Israeli companies and businesses.

Ms Ashton said that the EU opposed a boycott of Israel, adding that 'we don't want to see Israel isolated'.

The BDS campaign (boycott, divestment and sanctions), which was launched in 2005, has been gaining support throughout the world. The movement sometimes targets only those goods produced in the occupied territories, but in other cases boycotts all Israeli products, companies and institutions indiscriminately. Last year for example, the famous British astrophysicist Stephen Hawking turned down an invitation to participate in a conference in Israel.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the BDS campaign?

2. Is she aware of the impunity surrounding Israel's actions towards the Palestinian people?

3. What does she propose be done to stop Israel violating international law?

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

The HR/VP is fully aware of the BDS campaign.

The EU's long-standing position is that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. The EU remains firmly opposed to Israeli settlements and activities that derive from it in Palestine and is conveying this message to its Israeli counterparts at all levels as well as in various International fora ([1]).

The EU guidelines issued in July 2013 implement this policy by preventing Israeli settlements and activities from benefiting from EU funding. Thus, the Commission must ensure that the requirements of EU legislation are fully and effectively implemented. In addition, EEAS and Commission services are working on EU-wide guidelines on labelling in order to implement the FAC conclusions of May and December 2012. The HR/VP Catherine Ashton received strong support from the Members States to continue this work. Developing such guidelines is a complex issue, because the relevant EU legislation is very detailed and elaborate. Consumers have the right to be informed of where something comes from. Consumers must not be misled. Saying that a product is 'Made in Israel' when it is produced in Israeli settlements is, indeed, misleading. This has nothing to do with boycotts or other campaigns.

([1]) http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140111_02_en.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-003194/14
aan de Commissie
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(18 maart 2014)

Betreft: Cisgenese

Op 11 maart nam het Europees Parlement een rapport aan over de toekomst van de Europese tuinbouwsector — groeistrategieën (2013/2100(INI)). In paragraaf 31 staat: „verzoekt de Commissie onderscheid te maken tussen cisgene en transgene gewassen en een ander goedkeuringsproces in te stellen voor cisgene gewassen".

1. Op welke manier is de Commissie van plan gehoor te geven aan dit verzoek van het Europees Parlement?

2. Op welke termijn is de Commissie van plan gehoor te geven aan dit verzoek van het Europees Parlement?

3. Deelt de Commissie de conclusies uit 2012 van het Panel voor genetisch gemodificeerde organismen (ggo's) van de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) in hun „Scientific opinion addressing the safety assessment of plants developed through cisgenesis and intragenesis" wanneer zij stellen dat cisgenese even veilig is als klassieke veredeling?

4. Deelt de Commissie de conclusies uit 2012 van het Panel voor genetisch gemodificeerde organismen van de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) in zijn „Scientific opinion addressing the safety assessment of plants developed through cisgenesis and intragenesis" wanneer zij stellen dat wanneer alleen soorteigen genen bij de veredeling worden gebruikt er geen sprake is van een ggo?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(22 april 2014)

1. De Commissie analyseert momenteel de juridische status van nieuwe technieken voor plantenveredeling, waaronder cisgenese, om te bepalen of deze nieuwe technieken onder de bestaande wetgeving inzake genetisch gemodificeerde organismen (ggo's) vallen. Tegelijkertijd verzocht de Commissie het panel voor ggo's van de Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) een wetenschappelijk advies uit te brengen over gewassen die door middel van cisgenese en intragenese zijn ontwikkeld, aangaande de risico's die deze kunnen inhouden en de toepasbaarheid van de bestaande richtsnoeren over genetisch gemodificeerde planten, voor de risicobeoordeling ervan.

2. De Commissie beoogt deze analyse binnen de komende maanden af te ronden.

3. Het EFSA-panel voor ggo's heeft in haar wetenschappelijk advies geconcludeerd dat cisgeen en conventioneel gekweekte planten met gelijkaardige gevaren in verband kunnen worden gebracht, terwijl intragene en transgene planten aan nieuwe gevaren kunnen worden gelinkt. Deze conclusie heeft echter geen invloed op de juridische analyse die momenteel door de Commissie wordt uitgevoerd.

4. Er werd geen juridische beoordeling gevraagd aan of gegeven door de EFSA over of de definitie van „ggo" van toepassing is op de organismen die werden verkregen door het gebruik van deze nieuwe technieken voor plantenveredeling, aangezien de Commissie van mening is dat het niet tot de bevoegdheden van de EFSA behoort om de Commissie juridisch advies te verlenen.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003194/14
to the Commission
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Cisgenesis

On 11 March, the European Parliament adopted a report on the future of Europe's horticulture sector — strategies for growth (2013/2100(INI)). Paragraph 31 includes the passage: 'Calls on the Commission to differentiate between cisgenic and transgenic plants and to create a different approvals process for cisgenic plants'.

1. How does the Commission intend to comply with this request by the European Parliament?

2. Within what timeframe does the Commission intend to comply with this request by the European Parliament?

3. Does the Commission endorse the conclusions reached in 2012 by the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in its 'Scientific opinion addressing the safety assessment of plants developed through cisgenesis and intragenesis', when it states that cisgenesis is just as safe as conventional plant breeding?

4. Does the Commission endorse the conclusions reached in 2012 by the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in its 'Scientific opinion addressing the safety assessment of plants developed through cisgenesis and intragenesis', when it states that, if only genes from one and the same species are used for plant breeding, the result is not a GMO?

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

1. The Commission is carrying out the analysis of the legal status of New Plant Breeding Techniques (NPBT), including cisgenesis, in order to decide if these new techniques are to be considered as falling under the existing GMO legislation. In parallel, the EFSA GMO Panel was requested by the Commission to deliver a scientific opinion on plants developed through cisgenesis and intragenesis, in terms of the risks they might pose and the applicability of the existing guidance documents on GM plants for their risk assessment.

2. The Commission intends to complete this analysis within the forthcoming months.

3. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on GMOs in its scientific opinion concluded that similar hazards can be associated with cisgenic and conventionally bred plants, while novel hazards can be associated with intragenic and transgenic plants. This conclusion does however not impact on the legal analysis being currently performed by the Commission.

4. No legal assessment on whether the definition of GMO applies to the organisms obtained through the use of these NPBTs was either requested to or delivered by EFSA, since the Commission considers that it does not fall under the remits of EFSA to provide legal advice to the Commission.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-003195/14
do Komisji
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(18 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Afrykański Pomór Świń (ASF) – bariery w eksporcie do Rosji i innych krajów

W związku z wykryciem na Litwie a później w Polsce w pasie przygranicznym z Białorusią padłych dzików zakażonych wirusem Afrykańskiego Pomoru Świń, Federacja Rosyjska wprowadziła embargo na import żywca i wieprzowiny z Unii Europejskiej. Polska, zgodnie z przepisami UE, wprowadziła obszar ochronny, z którego mięso nie może być eksportowane poza obszar kraju. Od czasu znalezienia zakażonych zwierząt, nie stwierdzono ani zachorowań trzody na ASF, ani też kolejnych przypadków zakażonych dzików.

14 marca pojawiły się doniesienia medialne o eksporcie świń z Austrii, na podstawie certyfikatów europejskich z ręcznym dopiskiem „nie pochodzi z terenów Polski oraz Litwy".

1. Czy eksport oparty na ręcznie modyfikowanych i odbiegających od wzoru dokumentach jest dopuszczalny w świetle prawa UE?

2. Jakie Komisja zamierza podjąć działania, by Federacja Rosyjska zdjęła embargo na mięso wieprzowe i żywiec z terenów nieobjętych obszarem ochronnym w całej UE, wliczając w to obszar Polski?

3. Czy, w związku z niewystępowaniem dalszych zakażeń, możliwe jest ograniczenie w Polsce strefy ochronnej, o co wnioskował Stanisław Kalemba, polski Minister Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(22 kwietnia 2014 r.)

Od czasu wprowadzenia tego zakazu Komisja stoi na stanowisku, że eksport do Federacji Rosyjskiej („Rosji") zostanie wznowiony w przypadku wszystkich niedotkniętych chorobą obszarów państw członkowskich; Komisja poprosiła zatem państwa członkowskie o powstrzymanie się od negocjacji dwustronnych lub ustaleń z Rosją w tej sprawie, ponieważ mogłoby to zaszkodzić staraniom na rzecz zniesienia zakazu na poziomie UE. Traktaty UE określają zawieranie umów handlowych z państwami trzecimi jako wyłączną kompetencję Unii.

Służbom rosyjskim udostępniono na tyle dużą ilość informacji, aby zagwarantować bezpieczeństwo eksportu z UE, a dalsze wyjaśnienia przedstawiono podczas serii spotkań. Ponadto w dniu 28 lutego 2014 r. członek Komisji odpowiedzialny za zdrowie i konsumentów spotkał się z rosyjskim ministrem rolnictwa w celu znalezienia rozwiązania.

Strona rosyjska twierdzi, że zasadniczo zgadza się na regionalizację, jednak nalega na wyłączenie kilku państw członkowskich w przypadku ewentualnego wznowienia handlu. Stanowisko to nie jest możliwe do przyjęcia, ponieważ narusza zasady handlu przyjęte na arenie międzynarodowej.

Mimo niezadowalających jak dotąd wyników negocjacji Komisja utrzymuje kontakty z władzami rosyjskimi i dokłada dalszych starań w celu osiągnięcia porozumienia.

Biorąc jednak pod uwagę powagę tego oczywistego naruszenia zasad międzynarodowych, Komisja rozpoczęła procedurę prowadzącą do wszczęcia postępowania w zakresie rozstrzygania sporów w ramach WTO.

Obszary poddane ograniczeniom w Polsce zostały zmienione w dniu 27 marca 2014 r. ([1]). Nowe środki przewidują zróżnicowanie obszarów na podstawie poziomu zagrożenia. Zakażony obszar w Polsce został zmniejszony, a w jego sąsiedztwie ustanowiono strefę buforową, gdzie stosowane są mniej rygorystyczne ograniczenia.

([1]) C(2014) 1979: Decyzja wykonawcza Komisji w sprawie środków kontroli w zakresie zdrowia zwierząt w odniesieniu do afrykańskiego pomoru świń w niektórych państwach członkowskich.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003195/14
to the Commission
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: African Swine Fever (ASF) — restrictions on exports to Russia and other countries

Following the discovery in Lithuania and subsequently in Poland, close to the border with Belarus, of dead wild boar infected with African Swine Fever, Russia imposed an embargo on imports of wild pigs and pigmeat from the EU. In accordance with EU rules, Poland set up a buffer zone, banning exports of meat produced within that zone. Since the infected animals were discovered, no cases of ASF have been recorded among the domestic pig population and no further ASF-infected wild boars have been identified.

On 14 March 2014 the media carried reports of live pigs having been exported from Austria under EU certificates which had been amended by hand to indicate that the animals were not from Poland or Lithuania.

1. Does EC law allow goods to be exported under non-standard documents that have been amended in this way?

2. What steps will the Commission be taking to secure the lifting of the Russian ban in respect of imports of live pigs and pigmeat from those parts of the EU, including Poland, that lie outside the buffer zone?

3. Given that no further cases have been identified, can the size of the buffer zone now be reduced, as called for by the Polish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Stanisław Kalemba?

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

The Commission's position since the introduction of this ban is that exports to the Russian Federation ('Russia') shall resume from all the unaffected areas of the Member States and has invited Member States to refrain from bilateral negotiations or arrangements with Russia on the issue as this could harm the efforts to lift the ban at EU-level. The EU treaties define the conclusion of agreements with third countries on trade as exclusive Union competence.

A large amount of information has been made available to the Russian services sufficient to guarantee the safety of EU exports and further clarifications were provided in a series of meetings. In addition, the Member of the Commission responsible for Health and Consumers met the Russian Minister of Agriculture on the 28 February 2014 with the aim of reaching a solution.

The Russian side claims to agree in principle with regionalisation, however, it insists in excluding several Member States from a possible resumption of trade. This position is not acceptable as it violates the internationally established trade principles.

Despite the disappointing results from negotiations so far the Commission maintains contacts with the Russian authorities and continues its efforts to reach an agreement.

However, given the severity of the impact of this obvious violation of international principles the Commission has initiated the process leading to a WTO dispute settlement case.

The areas subjected to restrictions in Poland have been modified on 27 March 2014 ([1]). The new measures differentiate areas by level of risk. The infected area in Poland has been reduced in size and a buffer zone adjacent to it established where less stringent restrictions apply.

([1]) C(2014) 1979: Commission Implementing Decision concerning animal health control measures relating to African swine fever in certain Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003197/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Κατάρρευση της δημόσιας υγείας στη νησιωτική Ελλάδα και ιδιαίτερα στις Κυκλάδες

Οι δαπάνες για τη δημόσια υγεία στην Ελλάδα υπέστησαν τα τελευταία χρόνια τεράστια μείωση, με αποτέλεσμα οι συνέπειες στη νησιωτική Ελλάδα, και ειδικότερα στα 24 νησιά των Κυκλάδων, να είναι τραγικές. Για παράδειγμα, δεν υπάρχει γιατρός σε πέντε μικρά νησιά: Ανάφη, Θηρασιά, Σίκινο, Φολέγανδρο και Κίμωλο. Στα άλλα μικρά νησιά, γιατροί υπάρχουν μόνο με αποσπάσεις των δεκαπέντε, είκοσι ημερών, και είναι αναγκασμένοι να κάνουν εφημερίες εικοσιτέσσερις ώρες το εικοσιτετράωρο. Σε ό,τι αφορά στα Πρωτοβάθμια Κέντρα Υγείας των μεσαίων νησιών, το προσωπικό είναι σχεδόν ανύπαρκτο. Ακόμα και στα Πολυδύναμα Περιφερειακά Ιατρεία των μεγαλυτέρων νησιών στις Κυκλάδες, που παρουσιάζουν εποχιακά, λόγω τουρισμού, μεγάλη αύξηση πληθυσμού, υπάρχουν τεράστιες ελλείψεις γιατρών και παραϊατρικού προσωπικού. Υπάρχει νοσοκομείο το οποίο στοίχισε 14 εκατομμύρια ευρώ με ενίσχυση της ΕΕ και δεν λειτουργεί λόγω έλλειψης προσωπικού. Η κατάργηση των μονάδων πρωτοβάθμιας φροντίδας, σε όσα νησιά υπήρχε μέχρι σήμερα, έχει επιδεινώσει τα προβλήματα των κατοίκων, με αποτέλεσμα οι ασφαλισμένοι να πρέπει να πηγαίνουν με δικά τους έξοδα σε άλλα νησιά ή και στον Πειραιά, για να εξυπηρετηθούν. Οι διακομιδές των ασθενών είτε γίνονται με πρωτόγονες συνθήκες είτε με ιδιωτικά σκάφη, που όμως τιμολογούν πανάκριβα τις πενιχρές υπηρεσίες που παρέχουν.

Με δεδομένο ότι το άρθρο 174 της ΣΛΕΕ αναφέρει ότι η Ένωση προωθεί την οικονομική, κοινωνική και εδαφική συνοχή και ιδιαίτερα των νησιωτικών, διασυνοριακών και ορεινών περιοχών και ότι το ψήφισμα του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου της 22ας Σεπτεμβρίου 2010 αναφέρει ότι πρέπει να λαμβάνονται υπόψη τα μόνιμα διαρθρωτικά προβλήματα, όπως ο νησιωτικός χαρακτήρας των περιοχών, στις πολιτικές της κοινωνικής συνοχής στην ΕΕ, να λαμβάνονται ειδικά μέτρα αντιστάθμισης των φυσικών μειονεκτημάτων στα κριτήρια επιλογής σχεδίων, και ότι χρειάζεται να εφαρμοστούν νέοι τρόποι οργάνωσης και παροχής των υπηρεσιών δημοσίου συμφέροντος, όπως είναι η υγεία σε νησιωτικές περιοχές, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Μια τέτοια άθλια κατάσταση στις προσφερόμενες υπηρεσίες υγείας μιας περιφέρειας με απόλυτο νησιωτικό χαρακτήρα, συμβάλλει στο στόχο της ευρωπαϊκής συνοχής, της ανάπτυξης των περιφερειών και της άρσης της απομόνωσης των νησιών;

2. Τι ειδικά μέτρα προτίθεται να πάρει, σε συνεργασία με τις αρμόδιες ελληνικές αρχές, προκειμένου να υπάρξει αύξηση του αναγκαίου υγειονομικού και διοικητικού προσωπικού, ώστε να λειτουργήσουν αποτελεσματικά οι μονάδες υγείας και να αποκτήσουν πρόσβαση σε όλα τα επίπεδα υγείας οι κάτοικοι των νησιών;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Μαΐου 2014)

Για την περίοδο 2014-2020, η παροχή υπηρεσιών υγειονομικής περίθαλψης στους πολίτες αποτελεί προτεραιότητα στο πλαίσιο του θεματικού στόχου για την προώθηση της κοινωνικής ένταξης, την καταπολέμηση της φτώχειας, καθώς και όλων των διακρίσεων. Παράλληλα, η εδαφική συνοχή είναι ένας εγκάρσιος στόχος των Ευρωπαϊκών Διαρθρωτικών και Επενδυτικών Ταμείων (ESI) που πρέπει να λαμβάνεται υπόψη από τις εθνικές και περιφερειακές αρχές κατά την εκπόνηση των αντίστοιχων προγραμμάτων και στον σχεδιασμό, την επιλογή και την εφαρμογή των επιμέρους παρεμβάσεων. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, τα Ταμεία ESI πρέπει να συμβάλουν στον μετριασμό των μειονεκτημάτων της απομόνωσης που οφείλεται στα γεωγραφικά χαρακτηριστικά των νησιών.

Για την επίτευξη του εν λόγω στόχου, ωστόσο, απαιτείται μια συνολική και ορθή εθνική και περιφερειακή πολιτική υγειονομικής περίθαλψης που να μπορεί να βελτιώσει τη λειτουργία των υφιστάμενων υποδομών υγειονομικής περίθαλψης στα νησιά, καθώς και την απρόσκοπτη πρόσβαση σε αυτά. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, τα Ταμεία ESI μπορούν να υποστηρίξουν την απόκτηση εξοπλισμού, την οργάνωση των νοσοκομείων και των μονάδων ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης, τα έργα ηλεκτρονικής υγείας, τη δυνατότητα πρόσβασης στα μικρά και απομακρυσμένα νησιά, την κατάρτιση των ιατρών και νοσοκόμων, τις εκστρατείες υγείας κ.λπ. Τα Ταμεία ESI, ωστόσο, δεν μπορούν να προσφέρουν στήριξη όσον αφορά τους μισθούς του προσωπικού. Οι ελληνικές αρχές θα πρέπει επομένως να εξετάσουν τους τρόπους υποστήριξης της κατάλληλης λειτουργίας των υποδομών υγειονομικής περίθαλψης, προκειμένου να διασφαλιστεί η παροχή ποιοτικών υπηρεσιών στους πολίτες καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του έτους.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003197/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Collapse of public health on Greek islands, particularly in the Cyclades

In recent years, public health spending in Greece has fallen precipitously, and the consequences for Greek islands, in particular the twenty-four Cycladic islands, are tragic. For example, the five small islands of Anafi, Thirassia, Sikino, Folegandros and Kimolos do not have a single doctor. On the other small islands, doctors are available only every fifteen or twenty days, and they are obliged to be on call around the clock. As regards the primary healthcare centres on the medium-sized islands, they hardly have any staff. Even in the multipurpose regional clinics on the largest islands in the Cyclades, whose populations swell enormously during the tourist season, there is a severe shortage of doctors and paramedical staff. There is a hospital which cost EUR 14 million in EU aid which is not operational due to a lack of staff. The abolition of primary care units on those islands where they existed until now has exacerbated the problems facing residents, so that insured persons have to go at their own expense to other islands or even to Piraeus to be treated. Patients are transported either under primitive conditions or by private boats, which charge exorbitant fees for the rudimentary services they provide.

Given that Article 174 TFEU states that the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion, particularly in island, cross-border and mountain regions and that the European Parliament resolution of 22 September 2010 states that account must be taken of permanent structural problems, such as the island character of some regions, in the EU's social cohesion policies, that special measures must be taken to offset the natural handicaps in project selection criteria, and that new ways of organising and providing services of public interest, such as health in island regions, must be implemented, will the Commission say:

1. Does such a wretched state of the health services provided in a region consisting entirely of islands contribute to the goal of European cohesion, regional development and ending the isolation of the islands?

2. What specific steps will it take, in cooperation with the competent Greek authorities, in order to increase the numbers of health and administrative staff so as to enable the health facilities to function properly and the residents of the islands to enjoy access to all levels of healthcare?

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

For 2014-2020, the provision of healthcare services to citizens features prominently in the framework of the thematic objective for the promotion of social inclusion, fight against poverty as well as against any discrimination. In parallel, territorial cohesion is a transversal objective of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds that should be taken on board by the national and regional authorities in preparing the respective programmes and in designing, selecting and implementing individual interventions. In this context, ESI Funds should contribute to mitigating the isolation handicaps due to geographical characteristics of islands.

To achieve this goal however, there is a need of a comprehensive and sound national and regional healthcare policy which can enhance the operation of existing healthcare infrastructures in the islands as well as the smooth access to them. In this perspective, ESI Funds can support the acquisition of equipment, the organisation of hospitals and of healthcare units, e-health projects, accessibility to small and remote islands, training of doctors and nurses, health campaigns etc. ESI Funds, however, cannot support salaries of the staff. Greek authorities should then consider ways to support the adequate operation of healthcare infrastructure in order to ensure the provision of quality services to citizens throughout the year.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003198/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(18 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Παραχώρηση Δημόσιας Περιουσίας Κρατικού Αερολιμένα Ρόδου

Το ακριτικό αεροδρόμιο της Ρόδου αποτελεί τον κυριότερο μοχλό ανάπτυξης του δωδεκανησίου τουρισμού, και το εν λόγο αεροδρόμιο είναι ο οικονομικός αιμοδότης των υπολοίπων μικρότερων νησιωτικών αεροδρομίων. Σε μια νησιωτική χώρα σαν την Ελλάδα, όπου το 80%-85% της τουριστικής κίνησης διακινείται αεροπορικά, είναι αυταπόδεικτα καθοριστικός ο ρόλος των κρατικών αεροδρομίων στην ανάπτυξη του τουρισμού και της εθνικής οικονομίας.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Γνωρίζει το κατά πόσο έχει ζητήσει η Τρόικα την άμεση ιδιωτικοποίηση του αεροδρόμιου της Ρόδου; Σε αυτή την περίπτωση, υπάρχει μελέτη που να αποδεικνύει ότι μπορεί να γίνει αποτελεσματικότερη διαχείριση του αεροδρόμιου υπό ιδιωτικά συμφέροντα, πάντα με γνώμονα το συμφέρον των ταξιδιωτών, του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου και της τοπικής κοινωνίας;

2. Έχει υπόψη της ότι η ΥΠΑ έχει τη δυνατότητα από ιδίους πόρους, χωρίς επιβάρυνση του κρατικού προϋπολογισμού, να πραγματοποιήσει επενδύσεις της τάξης των 2 δισ. ευρώ σε μια δεκαετία από τα ανταποδοτικά τέλη;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Μαΐου 2014)

1. Η απόφαση όσον αφορά τα περιουσιακά στοιχεία του ελληνικού Δημοσίου ή τις δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις που θα ιδιωτικοποιηθούν, καθώς και τον βαθμό και τη σειρά με την οποία θα διεξαχθούν οι εν λόγω ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, λαμβάνεται αποκλειστικά από τις ελληνικές αρχές, αφού ληφθούν υπόψη οι περιορισμοί που αντιμετωπίζουν και οι στόχοι που έχουν θέσει.

2. Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για τα επενδυτικά σχέδια και τις προτεραιότητες της ελληνικής Υπηρεσίας Πολιτικής Αεροπορίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003198/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Concession of Rhodes airport which is State property

Rhodes airport, which is on the borders of Greece, is the main driver of growth for tourism in the Dodecanese islands, and the other smaller island airports depend on it economically. In an island country such as Greece, where between 80% and 85% of tourist traffic goes by air, the role of public airports in the development of tourism and the national economy is obviously crucial.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it know whether the Troika has called for the immediate privatisation of Rhodes airport? If so, does any study exist showing that the airport can be more effectively managed if it is privately run, judged from the point of view of the interests of travellers, the Greek State and the local community?

2. Is it aware that the Greek Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is able, using its own resources, without any cost to the State budget, to make an investment of the order of EUR 2 billion over a decade with funds raised from charges?

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

1. The choice of what, how far and in which sequence public assets or companies should be privatised in Greece is the exclusive result of the Greek authorities' decision, taking into account the various constraints they face and objectives they set for themselves.

2. The Commission is not aware of the investment plans and priorities of the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003199/14
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Drivers' hours

It has been brought to my attention that despite clear existing legislation on drivers' hours, many long-distance coach drivers still struggle to get adequate rest during long-distance journeys. This can be caused by inappropriate sleeping arrangements for drivers, such as shared rooms, noisy corridors etc. As a result, some drivers feel compelled to drive whilst tired. This practice can put the safety of passengers at risk.

Can the Commission confirm if it is aware of this problem? If so, what is it doing to ensure that tour companies act responsibly by providing suitable conditions for their drivers to rest, thereby ensuring that legislation on drivers' hours is effective in achieving its stated aims?

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

The Commission was made aware of cases of drivers' discontent with the quality of their rest periods. There are two main legislative acts establishing social protection rules in road transport. Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 ([1]) which sets out minimum requirements on driving times, breaks and rest periods, and Directive 2002/15/EC ([2]) which provides for maximum weekly working time limits and night work restrictions. Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 imposes an obligation on the employers to organise the work of their drivers in such a way that they are able to comply with this regulation's requirements. As long as the work patterns established by the transport undertakings respect the latter the Commission has no grounds to intervene.

The EU transport legislation does not cover other aspects of working conditions, as these are subject to the general social policy and/or national laws. Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 establishing common rules concerning the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator ([3]) obliges a transport undertaking to comply with the national rules in the field of employment conditions in the profession. An infringement of these rules may result in a loss of good repute of the transport undertaking, or even a loss of the Community licence. The adequate sanctions are to be determined by each Member State.

The Commission has always been encouraging a factual debate on improving working conditions in road transport. In fact, the Transport White paper of 2011 ([4]) included in its initiative 8 (Social Code) an invitation to the social partners to reflect on possible developments in the working standards. The Commission intends to support, if they so wish, the social partners' joint work to this end.

([1]) OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 80, 23.3.2002, p. 35.
([3]) OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, p. 51.
([4]) White Paper — Roadmap to a single European transport area — towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM(2011)0144 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003200/14
alla Commissione
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(18 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Situazione della popolazione uigura in Cina

Dopo l'incidente mortale avvenuto il 3 marzo 2014 nella stazione ferroviaria di Kunming, capoluogo della provincia sud-occidentale dello Yunnan, il 7 marzo Zhang Chunxian, capo di partito per la provincia uigura, in un dibattito aperto ai media ha affermato: «Non avremo alcuna pietà per i terroristi e la regione li colpirà con risolutezza, altrimenti diventano arroganti». Da tempo gli uiguri sono presi di mira dal governo cinese con tattiche oppressive violente che mirano a isolare e far tacere ogni dissenso. Tale modo di operare non ha fatto che accrescere la violenza nella provincia e le autorità cinesi stanno utilizzando tale fatto come scusa per una repressione più ampia contro ogni dissenso.

L'UE sta monitorando la situazione concernente l'oppressione ai danni della popolazione uigura in Cina?

Quali misure sta adottando l'UE per far sì che la Cina segua le norme giuridiche internazionali per perseguire i responsabili degli attacchi e garantire che tale incidente non venga utilizzato per giustificare altre repressioni violente ai danni delle minoranze in Cina?

Intende la Commissione sollevare la questione della mancanza di libertà fondamentali e delle continue violazioni dei diritti umani in Cina in occasione della sua riunione con il presidente della Cina Xi Jinping il 29 marzo 2014?

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

L'UE affronta costantemente il problema della tutela di tutti i diritti umani delle minoranze in Cina, anche uigura, in sede di Consiglio dei diritti umani e dell'Assemblea generale dell'ONU. Il problema è stato inoltre sollevato nel quadro del dialogo sui diritti umani UE-Cina svoltosi lo scorso giugno a Guiyang e durante la visita del rappresentante speciale dell'UE per i diritti umani lo scorso settembre a Pechino e nella regione autonoma del Tibet.

Il primo febbraio l'AR/VP ha rilasciato una dichiarazione sul trattamento riservato ai difensori dei diritti umani e ai loro familiari e a tutti coloro che, come Ilham Tohti, promuovono i diritti delle persone appartenenti a minoranze. In occasione delle riunioni bilaterali con il presidente Xi Jinping del 31 marzo, l'Unione ha inoltre sottolineato l'importanza dei diritti umani nelle relazioni UE-Cina ricordando quanto la tutela della libertà di espressione e di opinione sia un valore importante per l'Unione.

L'UE continuerà a seguire la situazione e a significare al governo cinese le proprie preoccupazioni per il trattamento della minoranza uigura nello Xinjiang e nel resto del paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003200/14
to the Commission
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Situation of the Uighur population in China

Following a deadly incident on 3 March 2014 at a railway station in Kunming, capital of the southwest Yunnan province, Zhang Chunxian, Party Chief for the Uighur province, said on 7 March in a discussion open to the media: 'We will show no mercy to terrorists, and the region will resolutely crack down on them — otherwise, they will become arrogant'. The Uighurs have long been targeted by the Chinese government with violent oppressive tactics which aim to isolate and silence any dissent. This practice has created even greater violence in the province and the Chinese authorities are using this as an excuse for a wider crackdown on all dissent.

Is the EU monitoring the situation regarding the oppression of the Uighur population in China?

What steps is the EU taking to request that China follow international judicial standards in prosecuting those responsible for the attacks, and to ensure that this incident will not be used to justify another violent crackdown against minorities in China?

Will the Commission raise the issue of the lack of fundamental freedoms and the continuous human rights violations in China at its meeting with the President of China, Xi Jinping, on 29 March 2014?

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

The EU has consistently raised the question of the enjoyment of all the human rights by persons belonging to minorities in China, including Uighurs, at the UN Human Rights Council and at UN General Assembly, as well as during the most recent EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in Guiyang, last June, and during the visit of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to Beijing and the Tibetan Autonomous Region, last September.

On 1 February, the HR/VP Ashton issued a statement on the treatment of human rights defenders and their relatives, including those who, like Ilham Tohti, promote the human rights of persons belonging to minorities. During the bilateral meetings held with President Xi Jinping on 31 March, the EU also underlined the importance of human rights in EU-China relations and recalled the EU's attachment to the protection of freedom of expression and belief.

The EU will continue to monitor the situation and raise its concerns over the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang and in the rest of the country with the Chinese Government.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003201/14
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 mars 2014)

Objet: Partenariat transatlantique UE/États-Unis et enseignement supérieur

Les inquiétudes se multiplient sur les effets du partenariat transatlantique pour le commerce et l'investissement (PTCI). L'enseignement supérieur est un domaine inclus dans la discussion préparatoire à l'accord sur le marché transatlantique.

Plusieurs organisations de représentants européens de l'enseignement, dont l'Union européenne des étudiants (ESU), ont demandé que le domaine de l'éducation soit totalement exclu de l'accord face à la crainte de voir l'enseignement public considéré comme un service économique ordinaire. Le secteur de l'éducation serait alors exposé à la commercialisation et la privatisation, ce qui engendrerait, entre autres, des différends concernant la qualité et la reconnaissance des diplômes entre les deux partenaires commerciaux.

1. La Commission est-elle au courant de cette demande légitime des représentants européens de l'enseignement?

2. La Commission peut-elle fournir des informations concernant des négociations sur le volet portant sur l'éducation et la reconnaissance des diplômes dans cet accord transatlantique?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(15 mai 2014)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à sa réponse à la question écrite E-3478/2014 ([1]).

La reconnaissance des diplômes n'entre pas dans le cadre des négociations sur le Partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement (TTIP). Comme tous les autres accords de libre-échange, le TTIP fixera probablement un cadre pour une éventuelle reconnaissance mutuelle des qualifications professionnelles.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003201/14
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and higher education

Concerns are growing over the implications of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Higher education is one of the topics included in the talks on the agreement which would create a transatlantic market.

However, a number of organisations representing teachers and students, including the European Students' Union, have called for education to be completely excluded from the scope of the agreement, in response to fears that it will end up being treated as an economic activity like any other. This could leave the education sector open to commercialisation and privatisation and, in turn, give rise to disputes concerning the validity and the mutual recognition of diplomas.

1. Is the Commission aware of this entirely reasonable call made by representatives of European education establishments?

2. Can it provide information on the negotiations on the section of the TTIP relating to education and the recognition of diplomas?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-3478/2014 ([1]).

The recognition of diplomas is not part of The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations. As in all other Free Trade Agreements, TTIP is likely to set a framework for a possible mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003202/14
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 mars 2014)

Objet: Utilisation des pesticides et santé des agriculteurs

L'utilisation de pesticides et autres produits chimiques dans l'agriculture facilite le travail des agriculteurs et garantie de meilleures récoltes, mais la chimie telle qu'utilisée dans l'agriculture a des conséquences négatives pour l'environnement, les consommateurs et les agriculteurs.

Les problèmes de santé des agriculteurs et de leurs proches pourraient être liés à l'utilisation de pesticides. D'ailleurs, les techniques de traitement font que les produits sont volatiles et que des villages entiers se trouvent au milieu de vignes ou d'arbres fruitiers et reçoivent à leur insu les embruns des pesticides utilisés à haute dose dans la viticulture et l'arboriculture, par exemple ceux répandus par hélicoptère.

Il y a encore quelques années, aucune pathologie liée aux pesticides chez les agriculteurs n'était reconnue comme maladie professionnelle. La maladie de Parkinson a été reconnue comme telle en France mais d'autres maladies sont également à prendre en considération, notamment les leucémies, certains lymphomes et les perturbateurs endocriniens.

1. La Commission a-t-elle envisagé la réalisation d'une étude d'impact de l'utilisation de produits chimiques et phytosanitaires sur la santé des agriculteurs?

2. La Commission peut-elle fournir des données exactes concernant le lien direct entre l'utilisation de pesticides et les maladies développées dans le milieu rural?

3. La Commission a-t-elle prévu la création d'un fonds pour la prévention des maladies liées à l'activité agricole? Existe-t-il un système de phyto-pharmacovigilance européen?

4. La reconnaissance des maladies professionnelles dans l'agriculture est-elle suivie au niveau de l'Union et par quels moyens? Si tel n'est pas le cas, comment la Commission peut-elle s'intéresser à la santé des travailleurs agricoles et des populations soumises à leur insu à de hautes doses de pesticides?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(21 mai 2014)

L'utilisation d'un produit phytopharmaceutique n'est autorisée dans un État membre que s'il n'a pas d'effet nocif immédiat ou différé sur la santé des êtres humains, y compris les groupes vulnérables et sur les groupes exposés sur leur lieu de travail, ou encore s'il n'a pas d'effet inacceptable sur l'environnement ([1]). Le cas échéant, les produits phytopharmaceutiques sont munis d'étiquettes indiquant les conseils de prudence pour la protection de la santé humaine ([2]).

Les pulvérisations aériennes sont interdites dans l'Union européenne ([3]). Dans les États membres, des dérogations sont possibles à certaines conditions, parmi lesquelles une évaluation des risques liés à la pulvérisation aérienne concernée et l'interdiction de toute pulvérisation à proximité immédiate des zones résidentielles. Au cas où la pulvérisation aérienne est autorisée, il convient de prendre pour avertir en temps utile les résidents et les passants.

L'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (Efsa) a commandé une étude sur les liens entre l'exposition aux pesticides et les effets sur la santé humaine ([4]). L'étude a examiné 43 259 citations dans la littérature ainsi que les données concernant la présence de cancer ou la santé des enfants et l'exposition professionnelle aux pesticides. Malgré cette importante quantité de données, il n'a pas été possible de tirer des conclusions fermes, ce qui était déjà le cas lors des études précédentes. En ce qui concerne les cancers pédiatriques et la maladie de Parkinson, les méta-analyses indiquent un risque accru en cas d'exposition aux pesticides, mais il est difficile de savoir à quels pesticides la population a été exposée et si les études ont inclus des pesticides déjà interdits dans l'UE.

([1]) Article 4 du règlement (CE) n° 1107/2009 concernant la mise sur le marché des produits phytopharmaceutiques et abrogeant les directives 79/117/CEE et 91/414/CEE du Conseil, JO L 309, p. 1.
([2]) Règlement (UE) n° 547/2011 de la Commission portant application du règlement (CE) n° 1107/2009 du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant les exigences en matière d'étiquetage de produits phytopharmaceutiques, JO L 155, p. 176.
([3]) Article 9 de la directive 2009/128/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil instaurant un cadre d'action communautaire pour parvenir à une utilisation des pesticides compatible avec le développement durable, JO L 309, p. 71.
([4]) Ntzani EE, Chondrogiorgi M, Ntritsos G, Evangelou E, Tzoulaki I, 2013. Literature review on epidemiological studies linking exposure to pesticides and health effects — EFSA publication connexe 2013:EN-497, 159 pp. Disponible en ligne: www.efsa.europa.eu/publications.

Les États membres ont l'obligation de mettre en place des systèmes de collecte d'informations sur les cas d'empoisonnements aigus par des pesticides (par exemple en cas d'accident), ainsi que le cas échéant sur les développements d'un empoisonnement chronique parmi les groupes qui peuvent être exposés régulièrement aux pesticides, comme les utilisateurs, les travailleurs agricoles ou les personnes vivant à proximité des zones d'épandage de pesticides ([5]).

([5]) Article 7 de la directive 2009/128/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil instaurant un cadre d'action communautaire pour parvenir à une utilisation des pesticides compatible avec le développement durable, JO L 309, p. 71.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003202/14
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Use of pesticides and farmers' health

Although pesticides and other chemicals make farmers' work easier and improve yields, they have a harmful impact on the environment, consumers and farmers.

Farmers and their families suffer health problems which could be linked to the use of pesticides. What is more, pesticides are applied in high concentrations in viticulture and arboriculture, sometimes even being sprayed from helicopters. This means that they can be carried considerable distances on the air, with the result that, unbeknownst to their inhabitants, villages which are surrounded by vineyards or fruit trees end up being enveloped in clouds of pesticides.

Only a few years ago, illnesses linked to exposure to pesticides were not regarded as occupational diseases. Parkinson's disease is now recognised as such in France, but consideration should also be given to the link between a person's occupation and other illnesses, in particular leukaemia, certain lymphomas and complaints caused by endocrine disruptors.

1. Does the Commission intend to carry out a study on the impact of chemicals and phytosanitary products on farmers' health?

2. Can the Commission provide detailed data on the direct link between the use of pesticides and the prevalence of certain illnesses in rural areas?

3. Does the Commission intend to set up a fund to finance measures to prevent illnesses linked to agricultural work? Is there a European system in place to monitor the use of phyto-pharmaceuticals?

4. Is the EU monitoring the recognition of occupational illnesses in agriculture? If so, how? If not, what is the Commission doing to protect the health of farmers and groups who are unwittingly exposed to high concentrations of pesticides?

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

The use of a plant protection product (PPP) shall only be authorised in a Member State (MS) if it has no immediate or delayed harmful effect on human health, including potential effects on vulnerable groups and groups exposed in the workplace, as well as if it has no unacceptable effects on the environment ([1]). If applicable, PPPs need to be labelled with safety precaution phrases for protecting human health ([2]).

Aerial spraying is prohibited in the European Union ([3]). Derogations are possible in MS under some conditions, which include a risk assessment for the particular aerial use and that the sprayed area is not in close proximity to residential areas. If the aerial spraying is authorised, measures for warning residents and bystanders in due time are needed.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has commissioned a study to link exposure to pesticides and health effects ([4]). In this study 43 259 citations were searched and outcomes like e.g. cancer, child health, and occupational exposure to pesticides were considered. Despite the large volume of data, firm conclusions cannot be made, which is in line with previous studies. For childhood cancers and Parkinson's disease, meta-analyses indicated an increased risk associated with pesticide exposure, but it is hard to understand which pesticide the populations were exposed to and whether the studies examined pesticides already banned in the EU.

MS are legally required to put in place systems for gathering information on pesticide acute poisoning incidents (i.e. accidents), as well as potential chronic poisoning developments among groups that may be exposed regularly to pesticides such as operators, agricultural workers or persons living close to pesticide application areas ([5]).

([1]) Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC, OJ L 309/1.
([2]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 547/2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards labelling requirements for plant protection products, OJ L 155/176.
([3]) Article 9 of Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides, OJ L 309/71.
([4]) Ntzani EE, Chondrogiorgi M, Ntritsos G, Evangelou E, Tzoulaki I, 2013. Literature review on epidemiological studies linking exposure to pesticides and health effects — EFSA supporting publication 2013:EN-497, 159 pp. Available online: www.efsa.europa.eu/publications
([5]) Article 7 of Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides, OJ L 309/71.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003203/14
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(18 mars 2014)

Objet: Attribution de bourses Erasmus aux étudiants ukrainiens

La Commission européenne a décidé de geler l'attribution des bourses Erasmus aux étudiants suisses dès la rentrée 2014, à la suite de la récente votation suisse sur la politique d'immigration.

Le montant global des bourses Erasmus pour les étudiants suisses est estimé à environ six millions d'euros, et ce sont environ 10 000 citoyens helvétiques qui devaient bénéficier de ces bourses à partir de la rentrée 2014.

Au vu de la situation actuelle en Ukraine et du désir d'Europe exprimé par les Ukrainiens, et parmi eux de nombreux étudiants, je demande à la Commission s'il est envisageable d'attribuer les bourses qui avaient été provisionnées pour des étudiants suisses à des étudiants ukrainiens.

En aidant les étudiants ukrainiens à venir étudier dans les pays de l'UE, l'Union européenne enverrait un signal de soutien fort et concret.

Réponse donnée par Mme Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(15 mai 2014)

L'UE a soutenu la mobilité à des fins d'apprentissage et les partenariats entre des universités de l'UE et des universités ukrainiennes par le passé et continuera à le faire au moyen du programme Erasmus+ (2014-2020). Erasmus+ propose aux Ukrainiens davantage de subventions pour la mobilité des étudiants, la coopération universitaire et les échanges de jeunes.

Plus de 4 000 jeunes Ukrainiens devraient participer à des échanges universitaires. Quant au personnel universitaire, il recevra des bourses pour se former et enseigner à l'étranger. Les étudiants et universités ukrainiens seront également éligibles aux bourses octroyées pour suivre des cours dans le cadre des masters communs proposés par les universités européennes. En outre, le soutien de l'UE aux mesures de renforcement des capacités permettra aux universités ukrainiennes de moderniser leurs programmes d'études et leurs pratiques d'enseignement, de mettre à niveau leurs infrastructures et d'améliorer la gouvernance. De plus, dans le cadre des actions Marie Skłodowska-Curie, les chercheurs pourront solliciter des bourses d'études doctorales ou post-doctorales; depuis 2007, l'UE a octroyé près de 200 bourses à des chercheurs ukrainiens.

L'Ukraine continuera à participer à l'initiative eTwinning pour les écoles, qui compte déjà 100 écoles ukrainiennes et près de 300 enseignants inscrits depuis son lancement officiel en mars 2013.

Plus de 7 000 Ukrainiens recevront une aide de l'UE pour participer à des échanges de jeunes dans le cadre du service volontaire européen et des actions de mobilité pour les animateurs socio-éducatifs.

La Suisse reste éligible à une participation au programme Erasmus+ en tant que pays tiers («pays partenaire»), mais elle n'est plus éligible à une participation sous le statut de «pays participant au programme», c'est-à-dire sur un pied d'égalité avec les États membres, comme cela était initialement prévu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003203/14
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Erasmus grants for Ukrainian students

The Commission has decided to stop awarding Erasmus grants to Swiss students from the beginning of the next academic year in response to the recent Swiss referendum on immigration policy.

The total value of the Erasmus grants awarded to Swiss students is put at around EUR 6 million. Some 10 000 Swiss nationals would have received these grants from autumn 2014 onwards.

Given the current situation in Ukraine and the fact that many Ukrainians, including large numbers of students, are keen to see their country join the EU, would it be possible for the grants which had been earmarked for Swiss students to be awarded to Ukrainian students instead?

In helping Ukrainian students to study in European universities, the EU would be sending out a very strong message of support for the country.

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2014)

The EU has supported learning mobility and partnerships between EU and Ukrainian universities in the past and will continue to do so through the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020). Erasmus+ offers Ukrainians more grants for student mobility, academic cooperation and youth exchanges than in the past.

Over 4 000 young Ukrainians are expected to participate in university exchanges; and university staff will receive grants for training and teaching abroad. Ukrainian students and universities will also be eligible for scholarships to take joint Master's courses offered by European universities. In addition, EU support for capacity building measures will allow Ukrainian universities to modernise their curricula and teaching practices, to upgrade their facilities and to improve governance. Furthermore, under the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, researchers will be able to apply for doctoral or post-doctoral fellowships; since 2007, the EU has awarded nearly 200 grants to Ukrainian researchers.

Ukraine will continue to take part in the eTwinning initiative for schools, with more than 100 Ukrainian schools and nearly 300 teachers already registered since the official launch in March 2013.

Over 7 000 Ukrainians will receive EU support to participate in youth exchanges, in the European Voluntary Service and in mobility actions for youth workers.

Switzerland is still eligible to participate in Erasmus+ as a third country ('Partner Country'), but not as a 'Programme Country' on an equal footing with the Member States as originally foreseen.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003204/14
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(18. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Europska strategija za osobe s invaliditetom 2010. — 2020.

U Europi živi 80 milijuna osoba s invaliditetom koje se suočavaju s ozbiljnim rizikom od siromaštva, socijalne isključenosti i diskriminacije, a takav stav potvrdilo je i istraživanje Europskog konzorcija za ljudska prava i invaliditet. Istraživanje je otkrilo kako je smanjivanje potrošnje na dobrobit socijalnih usluga nekih država članica prouzročilo nerazmjeran gubitak radnih mjesta osoba s invaliditetom, smanjenje naknada za nezaposlene te reduciranje pristupa osnovnim uslugama.

Prava osoba s invaliditetom eksplicitno su opisana u UN-ovoj Konvenciji o pravima osoba s invaliditetom koja je stupila na snagu 2008. godine, a do sada ju je potpisalo 119 zemalja, uključujući i Hrvatsku. Da su osobe s invaliditetom posebno ugrožena društvena skupina potvrđuje činjenica da je 21 % osoba s invaliditetom u EU-u izloženo izravnoj opasnosti od siromaštva.

Osjetljivost EU-a prema osobama s invaliditetom zorno pokazuje i Europska strategija za osobe s invaliditetom 2010.– 2020. koja je usvojena 15. studenoga 2010. U toj se strategiji naglašava da osobe s invaliditetom imaju pravo na potpuno i ravnopravno sudjelovanje u društvu i ekonomiji jer je negiranje jednakih mogućnosti kršenje temeljnih ljudskih prava.

U skladu s navedenim, koje konkretne mjere poduzima Komisija u pogledu preporuka za Hrvatsku kako bi se osiguralo ispunjavanje obveza RH prema potpisanim konvencijama i poveljama kao i ciljevima Europske strategije za osobe s invaliditetom 2010. — 2020.?

Odgovor g. Hahna u ime Komisije
(13. svibnja 2014.)

Konvencija Ujedinjenih naroda o pravima osoba s invaliditetom (CRPD) obvezujuća je za Europsku uniju u granicama njezinih nadležnosti. Samo kada države članice provode pravo Unije Komisija može ocijeniti je li nacionalni zakon ili mjera u skladu s Konvencijom i s pravima sadržanima u Povelji EU-a o temeljnim pravima. Putem strategije EU-a za osobe s invaliditetom 2010. — 2020. Komisija provodi aktivnosti na razini EU-a kojima podupire i dopunjuje djelovanje država članica u provedbi Konvencije. To uključuje razmjenu dobre prakse u skupini visoke razine za invaliditet u okviru koje se redovito raspravlja o provedbi strategije i Konvencije s predstavnicima uprava država članica, uključujući Hrvatsku, koji su odgovorni za pitanja invaliditeta kao i s predstavnicima civilnog društva. Od 2008. Komisija i skupina visoke razine objavljuju godišnje izvješće o provedbi Konvencije. Informacije o Hrvatskoj po prvi su puta uključene u izvješću iz 2013. ([1])

Kako bi se olakšala razmjena te uzajamno učenje i suradnja između EU-a i država članica o provedbi i praćenju Konvencije, Komisija od 2010. organizira godišnji radni forum koji okuplja mehanizme upravljanja koje su uspostavile države članice na temelju članka 33. i organizacije osoba s invaliditetom.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/dhlg_6th_report_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003204/14
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: European Disability Strategy 2010-2020

In Europe there are 80 million people with disabilities who are facing a serious risk of poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination: that state of affairs has been confirmed by a study by the European Consortium of Foundations on Human Rights and Disability. The study has revealed that welfare spending cuts in some Member States have caused disproportionately high job losses among people with disabilities, reduced unemployment benefits, and limited access to basic services.

The rights of people with disabilities are explicitly set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008 and has to date been signed by 119 countries, Croatia included. That the disabled are a particularly vulnerable social group is borne out by the fact that 21% of people with a disability in the EU are at direct risk of poverty.

The EU's disability awareness is amply demonstrated in the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, adopted on 15 November 2010. The strategy proceeds from the premiss that people with disabilities have the right to participate fully and equally in society and the economy: denial of equal opportunities is a breach of fundamental human rights.

In the light of the foregoing, what specific steps will the Commission take with a view to recommending that Croatia fulfil its obligations under the conventions and charters which it has signed, including the goals of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 May 2014)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is binding on the EU to the extent of its competences. Only where Member States are implementing Union law can the Commission assess whether a national law or measure is compliant with the CRPD and the rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Commission through the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is carrying out EU-level actions that support and complement Member States' action in implementing the CRPD. This includes the exchange of good practice in the Disability High Level Group (HLG) where the implementation of the strategy and the CRPD are regularly discussed with representatives of Member States' administrations responsible for disability issues, including Croatia, as well as civil society. Since 2008, the Commission and the HLG have published an annual report on the implementation of the CRPD. Information on Croatia was included for the first time in the 2013 report. ([1])

To facilitate the exchange and mutual learning between the EU and the Member States on the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD, the Commission organised since 2010 d an annual Work Forum gathering the governance mechanisms established by state parties under Article 33 and Disabled People's Organisations.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/dhlg_6th_report_en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003206/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(18 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Ochrona tajemnicy handlowej

Unia Europejska złożyła propozycję nowych regulacji mających na celu ochronę przedsiębiorstw w sytuacji utraty poufnych danych z powodu kradzieży lub wykorzystania ich niezgodnie z celem. Dzięki nowym przepisom rozwinie się współpraca i innowacyjność. Tajemnice handlowe są to informacje, które firmy chcą zachować tylko dla siebie. Jest szansa, że zyskają one lepszą ochronę dzięki przepisom zaproponowanym przez Komisję Europejską. Na nowych rozwiązaniach skorzystają przedsiębiorstwa odnoszące straty związane z kradzieżami i niewłaściwym wykorzystaniem poufnych informacji handlowych.

1. Czy w ramach nowej inicjatywy planowana jest także współpraca z krajami spoza Unii Europejskiej?

2. Czy europejski system będzie częścią transatlantyckiego partnerstwa w dziedzinie handlu i inwestycji?

3. Polska jest jednym z krajów Unii, w których sytuacja jest uregulowana. Jakie braki mają polskie przepisy dotyczące ochrony tajemnicy handlowej według Komisji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Michela Barniera w imieniu Komisji
(27 maja 2014 r.)

1. Wniosek Komisji ma na celu poprawę warunków dla innowacji w ramach rynku wewnętrznego i nie przewiduje współpracy z krajami nienależącymi do UE. Komisja gotowa jest jednak dostarczyć partnerom handlowym informacji na temat treści jej wniosku.

2. Wniosek Komisji jest obecnie przedmiotem procesu ustawodawczego. Do czasu zakończenia tego procesu nie istnieje w UE żaden system ochrony tajemnicy handlowej. Dlatego Komisja nie zgłosiła propozycji, by kwestia ochrony przed naruszeniem tajemnicy handlowej stanowiła część transatlantyckiego partnerstwa handlowo-inwestycyjnego.

3. Jak wspomniano powyżej, wniosek Komisji ma na celu poprawę warunków dla innowacji w ramach rynku wewnętrznego, a nie rozwiązywanie ewentualnych niedociągnięć prawnych w poszczególnych państwach członkowskich.

W dołączonej do wniosku ocenie skutków przedstawiono przegląd ram prawnych dotyczących naruszenia tajemnicy handlowej w państwach członkowskich (zob. w szczególności załącznik 9).

Dodatkowe informacje dostępne są w badaniu „Study on trade secrets and confidential business information in the internal market”, które zostało uwzględnione w ocenie skutków.

Obydwa dokumenty dostępne są pod adresem internetowym:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003206/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(18 March 2014)

Subject: Protecting trade secrets

The EU has submitted proposals for new regulations to protect businesses in the event that they lose confidential data through theft or improper use. These new rules will help cooperation and innovation to flourish. Trade secrets are information that businesses want to retain for their own exclusive use. It is possible that businesses will be better protected thanks to the provisions proposed by the Commission. The new mechanisms will be of benefit to companies suffering losses related to the theft and improper use of confidential trade information.

1. Is cooperation with non-EU countries also planned as part of the new initiative?

2. Will the European system form part of the Transatlantic Trade and InvestmentPartnership?

3. Poland is one of the EU Member States which have already regulated for such situations.What, in the Commission's view, are the shortcomings of Poland's laws on protectingtrade secrets?

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

1. The initiative of the Commission aims at improving conditions for innovation within the internal market and does not foresee cooperation with non-EU countries. However, the Commission is open to provide trade partners with information on the contents of its proposal.

2. The Commissions' proposal is subject to a legislative process. Until such process is duly completed there is no EU system of legal protection of trade secrets. Therefore the Commission has not proposed for the issue of protection against the misappropriation of trade secrets to form part of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

3. As mentioned above, the initiate of the Commission aims at improving conditions for innovation within the internal market, rather than solving possible shortcomings of the legislation in specific Member States.

The impact assessment accompanying the proposal provides an overview of the legal framework against the misappropriation of trade secrets in the Member States (see in particular Annex 9).

Further information is available in a 'Study on trade secrets and confidential business information in the internal market' which was commissioned as input for the impact assessment.

Both documents are available in the following Internet address:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003207/14
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(19 mars 2014)

Objet: L'Union entend-elle continuer à cautionner les violences de l'extrême droite en Ukraine?

La Commission propose à l'Ukraine un plan d'aide de 11 milliards d'euros, sous forme de dons et de prêts conditionnés, bien sûr, au respect des critères du FMI. S'agit-il ici d'acheter des alliés?

Cette fausse bienveillance ne doit pas gommer la nécessité de faire la lumière sur les violences commises en Ukraine, ni sur la responsabilité éventuelle de composantes de l'actuel gouvernement.

En effet, une conversation téléphonique entre Catherine Ashton et Urmas Paet, le ministre estonien des affaires étrangères, révélée par la presse, fait état de fortes présomptions concernant des liens entre les snipers qui ont tiré sur les manifestants ainsi que sur la police à Kiev et certaines composantes de l'actuel «gouvernement», en particulier le parti d'extrême droite Svoboda. Pour ne pas déstabiliser le nouveau gouvernement, qui compte quatre ministres issus de Svoboda, l'Union européenne ne réclamerait aucune enquête à leur sujet, conformément au souhait du ministre des affaires étrangères estonien, lequel a confirmé le contenu de ladite conversation.

— Ne faudrait-il pas, au contraire, faire la lumière sur ces événements?

— Pourquoi l'Union ne soutient-elle pas une enquête internationale à ce sujet?

— Pourquoi l'Union continuerait-elle à légitimer l'extrême droite ukrainienne en passant ces faits sous silence?

— Pourquoi n'est-il tenu aucun compte du vote du Parlement dénonçant ces groupes et les alliances avec eux?

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

Une enquête équitable et transparente doit être menée sur cette question par les autorités ukrainiennes, et les responsables doivent être traduits en justice. Comme indiqué dans les conclusions du Conseil des affaires étrangères du 14 avril, l'Union européenne se félicite de la volonté du gouvernement ukrainien d'enquêter sur l'ensemble des violations des Droits de l'homme et des actes de violence et d'extrémisme, ainsi que de la récente résolution parlementaire réclamant le désarmement immédiat de toutes les forces d'autodéfense illégales ([1]). La déclaration commune de Genève du 17 avril a permis de consolider davantage les mesures visant à rétablir la sécurité pour tous les citoyens de l'Ukraine ([2]). Le Groupe consultatif international du Conseil de l'Europe, qui a tenu sa première session le 9 avril, veillera à ce que toutes les procédures soient menées dans le respect des normes internationales.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/142223.pdf
([2]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140417_01_fr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003207/14
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Will the EU continue to endorse violence perpetrated by the extreme right in Ukraine?

The Commission has offered Ukraine an aid package, consisting of loans and grants, worth EUR 11 billion, provided, of course, it agrees to a deal with the IMF. Are we now in the business of buying allies?

This phoney generosity should not divert attention away from the need to shed light on the violent events in Ukraine and the role played in them by parties in the new government.

Details recently emerged of a telephone conversation between Catherine Ashton and Urmas Paet, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which the two discussed the credible link between the snipers who shot at protesters and police in Kiev and branches of the new coalition 'government', in particular the extreme right-wing faction Svoboda.

The Estonian foreign minister has confirmed the authenticity of the call, but, in an effort to avoid destabilising the new government, which has four Svoboda ministers, the EU has reportedly decided not to press for an investigation into the matter, as Paet had urged.

Should the aim not be to establish the truth about these events?

Why is the EU not pushing for an international investigation into the matter?

Why is the EU choosing to condone the actions of the Ukrainian extreme right by sweeping this matter under the carpet?

Why has Parliament's resolution condemning these groups and any alliance with them been ignored?

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

A fair and transparent investigation needs to be made into the matter by the Ukrainian authorities and those responsible should be brought to justice. As noted in the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 14 April, the EU welcomes the will of the Ukrainian government to investigate all human rights violations and acts of violence and extremism, as well as the recent parliamentary resolution calling for the immediate disarmament of all illegal self-defence forces. ([1]) The 17 April Joint Statement of Geneva further consolidates the steps to restore security for all citizens of Ukraine. ([2]) The International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe, inaugurated on 9 April, will advise to the effect that all procedures are conducted in line with international standards.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/142223.pdf
([2]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140417_01_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003208/14
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Living wage and public procurement

Can the Commission confirm that living-wage conditions, which guarantee a wage higher than the minimum wage, may be included in the contract performance clauses of a public procurement contract, provided they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory, are indicated in the contract notice or in the contract documents, and are related to the execution of the contract?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 April 2014)

The Commission can confirm that living-wage conditions guaranteeing pay higher than the minimum wage may be included in contract performance clauses, as noted by the Honourable Member, provided they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory, are indicated in the contract notice or in the contract documents, and are related to the execution of the contract in the Member State in question. Such conditions must also be compatible with Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-003209/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(19 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Conseguenze derivanti dalla consultazione referendaria in Crimea

Il 16 marzo scorso, una consultazione referendaria tenutasi in Crimea ha sancito la proclamazione della regione come repubblica sovrana e indipendente.

Secondo quanto riportato dagli organi ufficiali preposti alla comunicazione, le istituzioni dell'Unione europea si starebbero esprimendo in queste ore in maniera critica nei confronti di quanto sancito dalla volontà popolare.

— Considerando che il sì al referendum sopraccitato ha raggiunto quota del 96.6 %;

— considerando il «principio di autodeterminazione dei popoli» sancito dall'articolo 28 della Carta delle Nazioni Unite e

— considerando i contenuti delle conclusioni del Consiglio «Affari esteri» tenutosi a Bruxelles in data odierna;

può l'Alto Rappresentante comunicare quanto segue:

1. Quali sono le motivazioni politiche sulla cui base i ministri degli Esteri dell'UE hanno concordato a Bruxelles, in occasione del Consiglio «Affari esteri» odierno, di infliggere sanzioni a ventuno personalità russe ed ucraine?

2. Quali sono le ragioni sulla cui base l'UE dimostra avversione politica al referendum?

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

La sovranità e l'integrità territoriale dell'Ucraina devono essere tutelati come previsto dal diritto internazionale e come convenuto da Russia, Stati Uniti e Regno Unito nel Budapest memorandum del 1994. Le sanzioni sono state imposte alle persone responsabili di azioni che compromettono o minacciano illegalmente la sovranità e l'integrità territoriale dell'Ucraina, nell'ambito della condanna dell'UE all'aggressione russa nonché degli inviti alla Russia a ritirare le sue truppe nelle zone in cui sono stazionate in permanenza, in conformità degli accordi pertinenti.

Il «referendum» in Crimea era illegale e illegittimo. Non era conforme alla costituzione ucraina, secondo quanto confermato da una sentenza della Corte costituzionale ucraina e altresì dal parere della Commissione di Venezia del 21 marzo. Il «referendum» non ha rispettato i principi democratici di libera espressione e di libera volontà: numerosi casi di brogli elettorali, campagna elettorale squilibrata, assenza di una reale discussione sulle problematiche e presenza intimidatoria di soldati armati senza insegne distintive.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003209/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Consequences of the referendum in Crimea

On 16 March 2014, as a result of a referendum held in Crimea, the region was declared to be an independent and sovereign republic.

According to the official bodies responsible for communication, the EU institutions are apparently expressing critical views of that which has been sanctioned by the will of the people.

Given that, in the abovementioned referendum, 96.6% of the people voted yes to independence, given the principle of self-determination of peoples enshrined in Article 28 of the Charter of the United Nations and in view of the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council held in Brussels today, can the High Representative answer the following questions:

1. What are the political reasons why the EU foreign ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council today in Brussels agreed to impose sanctions on 21 leading Russian and Ukrainian figures?

2. For what reasons is the EU showing political aversion to this referendum?

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

Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be protected as foreseen by international law and as agreed by Russia, the United States and United Kingdom in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. Sanctions have been placed on persons responsible for actions that illegally undermine or threaten Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as part of the EU's condemnation of Russian aggression and calls for Russia to withdraw its forces to the areas of their permanent stationing, in accordance with relevant agreements.

The 'referendum' in Crimea was illegal and illegitmate. It was not in line with the Ukrainian constitution; as has been confirmed by a Ukrainian Constitutional Court ruling and also on 21 March by the opinion of the Venice Commission. The 'referendum' did not adhere to democratic standards of free expression and free will; with numerous cases of vote-rigging, an unbalanced campaign, no proper debate of the issues and the intimidating presence of armed soldiers not bearing an identifying insignia.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003212/14
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Geschäft mit dem Leid rumänischer Straßenhunde

In Rumänien werden Straßen- und Besitzerhunde von bezahlten Hundefängern im Auftrag der Stadt/Gemeinde brutal eingefangen, in sogenannte städtische „Tierheime" (Lager) verbracht und dort unter widrigsten Bedingungen bis zu 14 Tage ohne Futter und ohne Wasser gehalten. Mit den Hunden in Rumänien hat sich offensichtlich ein lukratives Geschäft entwickelt, wobei Gemeinden und Bürgermeister Millionen Euro mit deren Tötung verdienen, da pro Hund bis zu 250 EUR an die Gemeinden gezahlt werden.

1. Kann die Kommission sicherstellen, dass diese Gelder, die eigentlich der dauerhaften Dezimierung des Straßenhundeproblems mittels Kastration und Wiederaussetzen an ihren angestammten Plätzen („neuter and return") dienen sollen NICHT aus einem EU-Fonds für die Tollwutbekämpfung stammen?

2. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass andernfalls die EU-Fördergelder nach Rumänien sobald wie möglich gestoppt werden müssen, da diese dort offenbar zweckentfremdet werden, und die Gelder dann zweckgebunden und kontrolliert an Tierschutzvereine und Tierärzte-Teams vergeben werden sollten, die sich vor Ort um die systematische Kastration der Straßenhunde kümmern? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten bestehen seitens der EU?

3. Wie bewertet es die Kommission, dass bis zum Ende des Jahres ein Gesetz in Kraft treten soll, wonach es NGO verboten wird, Kastrationen durchzuführen, es jedoch eine Pflicht geben soll, alle Hunde zu kastrieren? Kann die Kommission darüber hinaus bestätigen, dass das Gesetz überdies vorsieht, dass jeder Hund vor der Kastration einer gründlichen Blutuntersuchung zu unterziehen ist — mit der Folge, dass von den derzeit nur 700 rumänischen Tierärzten, die überhaupt eine Kastration durchführen können, nur noch ca. 70 für das ganze Land übrig bleiben, die über ein entsprechendes Blutanalysegerät verfügen?

4. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass dieser tierschutzwidrige Umgang mit den Hunden ein unerträglicher Zustand in einem EU-Land ist und die EU nicht weiterhin tatenlos bei dieser unerträglichen Tierquälerei in Europa zusehen darf, da der Tierschutz ausdrücklich im Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der EU (Artikel 13) verankert und Tierschutz ein gesamtgesellschaftliches Anliegen ist?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(2. Mai 2014)

Die Frau Abgeordnete wird auf die Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-004111/2011, E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-002062/2012 und E-005276/2013 ([1]) verwiesen, in denen es um streunende Hunde und deren Behandlung geht.

Die Kommission kann keine Maßnahmen zur Kontrolle der Populationen von streunenden Hunden in Rumänien fördern, da dies nicht in den Zuständigkeitsbereich der EU fällt.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003212/14
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Suffering stray dogs in Romania exploited for profit

Stray and pet dogs in Romania are being cruelly captured by paid dog catchers on behalf of local authorities and taken to municipal 'dog shelters' (camps) where they are held for up to 14 days in appalling conditions without food or water. The extermination of dogs in Romania has clearly become a lucrative business, since local authorities and mayors receive EUR 250 for each dog killed and thus earn millions of euros from this practice.

1. Can the Commission confirm that this money, which is supposed to be used to tackle the problem of stray dogs once and for all by neutering them and returning them to the street ('neuter and return'), does not come from EU anti-rabies funds?

2. If this is EU money, does the Commission agree that, since it is clearly being misused, EU funding to Romania should be withdrawn as soon as possible and the money given instead to animal protection organisations and vets for the purpose of neutering stray dogs on site, and that the use of this money should be monitored? What other options are available to the EU?

3. What is the Commission's opinion of the new law which, when it enters into force by the end of this year, will make it compulsory for all dogs to be neutered, but will ban NGOs from carrying out the procedure? Can the Commission confirm that this law will also require every dog to have comprehensive blood tests before being neutered, even though only 70 of the mere 700 Romanian vets who can currently neuter dogs have the appropriate analysis equipment?

4. Since animal welfare is expressly enshrined in Article 13 TFEU, and since this is the responsibility of society as a whole, does the Commission agree that this cruel treatment is inexcusable for an EU Member State and that the EU can no longer simply stand by and watch animals suffering in such a way in Europe?

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

The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the answers to written questions E-004111/2011, E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-002062/2012 and E-005276/2013 ([1]) which address the issues of stray dogs and of dog population management.

EU competences do not allow the Commission to fund measures to control the stray dog population in Romania.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003213/14
à la Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(19 mars 2014)

Objet: ALECA et accès aux médicaments au Maroc

L'Union européenne négocie actuellement un accord de libre-échange complet et approfondi avec le Maroc. Un pan de cet accord concerne la propriété intellectuelle qui pourrait restreindre l'accès aux médicaments pour les Marocains. Plusieurs interrogations demeurent ainsi sur cet accord:

1. La Commission compte-t-elle augmenter la durée des brevets de 20 à 30 ans, au-delà donc de ce qui fait aujourd'hui consensus au sein de l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce? Augmenter la durée de ces brevets repousserait l'arrivée des médicaments génériques sur le marché marocain et serait directement au détriment de la population marocaine.

2. Va-t-elle prévoir des dispositions pour que le Maroc puisse passer outre un brevet pour des raisons de santé publique, ce qui permettra en cas de crises sanitaires d'offrir à une large population des médicaments abordables?

3. L'ALECA va-t-il permettre aux entreprises disposant d'un brevet de poursuivre un pays qui souhaite passer outre un brevet, et donc d'entamer des poursuites contre le Maroc?

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

1. L'une des grandes priorités de la politique commerciale de l'Union européenne consiste à assurer l'accès aux médicaments dans les pays en développement. C'est pourquoi, dans tous les accords de libre-échange, la Commission tient compte du niveau de développement et des préoccupations de ses partenaires commerciaux en matière de santé publique.

La Commission n'a pas envisagé de porter la durée des brevets à 30 ans et n'a pas l'intention de demander au Royaume du Maroc de le faire.

2. Les dispositions relatives à la propriété intellectuelle négociées avec le Royaume du Maroc comportent une référence explicite à la déclaration de Doha, de manière à garantir que les facilités accordées par l'accord sur les aspects des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce (accord sur les ADPIC), en ce qui concerne notamment les brevets sur les médicaments, peuvent être pleinement utilisées par les partenaires commerciaux. Ces facilités prévoient, entre autres, la possibilité, sous certaines conditions — parmi lesquelles une crise sanitaire —, de délivrer une licence obligatoire pour la production et la consommation nationales de médicaments.

3. La Commission veillera à ce qu'aucune disposition de l'accord sur une zone de libre-échange approfondie et complète ne remette en question la possibilité pour le Royaume du Maroc d'utiliser les facilités au titre d'un exercice légitime des droits que lui confère l'accord sur les ADPIC. Toutefois, un individu a évidemment la possibilité de recourir à la justice pour contester toute mesure dont il estimerait qu'elle viole ses droits essentiels, en vertu tant du droit national que du droit international.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003213/14
to the Commission
Gilles Pargneaux (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: DCFTA and access to medicines in Morocco

The European Union is currently negotiating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with Morocco. Part of this agreement covers intellectual property, which could restrict access to medicines for Moroccans. However, a number of doubts remain with regard to this agreement:

1. Does the Commission intend to increase the patent term from 20 to 30 years, beyond, therefore, what has currently achieved a consensus within the World Trade Organisation? Increasing the term of these patents would delay the entry of generic drugs onto the Moroccan market, which would be directly to the detriment of the Moroccan people.

2. Will the Commission make provision for Morocco to be able to override a patent for reasons of public health, which, in the event of health crises, would enable a large population to purchase affordable medicines?

3. Will the DCFTA allow companies holding a patent to sue a country that wants to override a patent and thus enable them to initiate legal proceedings against Morocco?

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

1. Ensuring access to medicines in developing countries is a major priority of the European Union Trade policy. This is why in all Free Trade Agreements the Commission takes into consideration the development status and public health concerns of their trading partners.

The Commission has neither discussed nor does it intend to request the Kingdom of Morocco to extend the term of patent protection to 30 years.

2. The provisions on intellectual property negotiated with the Kingdom of Morocco include an explicit reference to the Doha Declaration so as to ensure that the flexibilities granted by the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, especially as regards patents on medicines, can be fully used by trading partners. These flexibilities provide, *inter alia*, for the possibility, under certain conditions — including health related crisis — of issuing a compulsory license for domestic production and consumption of medicines.

3. The Commission will ensure that no provision in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) will call into question the possibility for the Kingdom of Morocco to use the flexibilities as a legitimate exercise of rights arising under the TRIPS Agreement. However, the right of an individual to resort to justice in relation to any measure that an individual would feel violates his substantive legal rights is an evident possibility both under national and international law.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003214/14
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Uloga socijalnog rada

Sustav socijalnog rada i skrbi o ljudima kojima treba pomoć temelj su socijalne države, pa tako danas obilježavamo Svjetski dan socijalnog rada. Važan doprinos te profesije pomaže olakšati život građanima svih dobi. Njihove široke odgovornosti uključuju brigu o najranjivijim skupinama društva zbog čega socijalni radnici zaslužuju prikladno priznanje za svoj rad.

Uloga socijalnog rada posebno je važna uslijed duge ekonomske krize i mnogih mjera štednje kada građani ostaju suočeni s ozbiljnim europskim socijalnim i gospodarskim neizvjesnostima. Zbog toga su kriteriji socijalne pomoći utemeljeni na principu solidarnosti još bitniji.

Na tragu pomoći socijalno najugroženijima na plenarnoj sjednici u veljači zastupnici su većinom glasova podržali prijedlog o novom programskom razdoblju Fonda za europsku pomoć najsiromašnijima (FEAD), spasivši od proračunskih rezova milijardu eura i zadržavši iznos od 3,5 milijarde eura u financijskim okvirima EU-a od 2014. do 2020. godine, iako taj iznos nije ni približno dostatan potrebama onih kojima je pomoć najpotrebnija.

Razmatra li Komisija opciju revizije programa s ciljem povećanja budžeta i prije njegovog formalnog isteka? Osim spomenutog fonda, koje dodatne mjere Europska komisija namjerava provesti kako bi se javnost senzibilizirala po pitanju važne uloge socijalnog rada za naše društvo i kako bi pomoć zaista bila pružena svima onima kojima je potrebna?

Odgovor g. Andora u ime Komisije
(15. svibnja 2014.)

Ako Fond za europsku pomoć najugroženijima nema pretenzija na to da se posve sam bori protiv oskudice najranjivijih europskih građana, svejedno treba doprinositi toj borbi podrškom nacionalnim mjerama kojima se najsiromašnijima osigurava nefinancijska potpora, što je pomoć u hrani, ali i osnovni potrošački proizvodi beskućnicima ili djeci koja žive u velikom siromaštvu.

Stoga je u ovo doba teških proračunskih ograničenja potraga za što većom efikasnosti dovela do razrade ovog prijedloga koji spaja početak i fleksibilnost.

U tu svrhu Komisija predlaže instrument kojim se istovremeno osigurava veliku predvidljivost sredstava i veliku fleksibilnost. Naime, države članice pokrenut će Fond u višegodišnjim programima. Na taj će način svaka država moći prilagoditi pružanje pomoći tako što će staviti naglasak na jedan oblik pomoći ili kombinirati više njih kako bi mogla na najbolji mogući način reagirati na nacionalnu situaciju.

U pogledu odluke o oslanjanju na socijalne radnike radi provedbe politike, ona se u cijelosti nalazi u nadležnosti svake države članice. Davanje prednosti nekom specifičnom obliku socijalne politike ili njegova promocija nije u nadležnosti Komisije.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003214/14
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: The role of social work

The system of social work and care for people in need is at the heart of the welfare state, and today we celebrate World Social Work Day. The important contribution that this profession makes helps make life easier for people of all ages. Social workers have a wide range of responsibilities, including caring for the most vulnerable groups in society. In view of this fact, social workers deserve adequate recognition for their work.

The role of social work is especially important in view of the economic crisis and the many austerity measures that have been imposed, as people are facing serious social and economic uncertainties across Europe. Therefore, criteria for social assistance that are based on the principle of solidarity are more necessary than ever.

As regards the most vulnerable groups in society, a majority of Members at the February 2014 part-session voted in favour of the proposal on a new programming period for the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), saving EUR 1 billion from being cut and maintaining the EUR 3.5 billion sum allocated under the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014 to 2020. This sum, however, is not even close to being enough to meet the needs of those who are in the greatest need of assistance.

Is the Commission weighing up the option of reviewing the programme with a view to increasing the budget before it formally expires? Besides the aforementioned fund, what additional measures does the Commission intend to implement to raise public awareness of the importance of social work to our society and to provide genuine assistance to all those who need it?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(15 mai 2014)

S'il ne saurait avoir pour ambition de répondre à lui seul au dénuement des citoyens européens les plus vulnérables, le Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis devrait néanmoins y contribuer en soutenant les dispositifs nationaux qui fournissent une assistance non-financière aux plus pauvres, aide alimentaire, mais aussi biens de consommation de base pour les personnes sans-abris ou les enfants confrontés à la très grande pauvreté.

Il reste qu'en ces temps de fortes contraintes budgétaires, la recherche d'une plus grande efficience a présidé à l'élaboration de cette proposition, qui conjugue ouverture et flexibilité.

Pour ce faire, la Commission propose un instrument qui assure à la fois une grande prévisibilité des ressources et une grande flexibilité. En effet, le Fonds serait mis en œuvre par les États membres à travers des programmes multi-annuels. Chaque pays serait donc en mesure d'adapter l'assistance en privilégiant une des formes d'assistance ou en les combinant, afin de répondre au mieux aux situations nationales.

Quant à la décision de s'appuyer sur des travailleurs sociaux pour mettre en œuvre leur politique, elle relève entièrement de la responsabilité de chaque État membre. Il n'est pas de la compétence de la Commission d'indiquer une préférence pour un type spécifique de politique sociale ou d'en faire la promotion.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003215/14
upućeno Komisiji
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(19. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Pripremljenost RH za sredstva EU-a namijenjena start-up poduzećima

Europska unija je od 2012. preko Europskog investicijskog fonda i inicijative Jeremie s 21 milijunom eura financirala start-up poduzeća u Bugarskoj. Prema podacima Europskog investicijskog fonda taj financijski instrument (Acceleration & Seed Fund) za malo i srednje poduzetništvo polučio je daleko najbolje rezultate od svih raspoloživih načina financiranja. Financiranje preko ulaska u kapital (equity financing) pokazalo se kao ključ uspjeha. Uzimajući u obzir važnost start-up poduzeća u strategiji EU 2020., zanima me je li takav financijski instrument predviđen za Hrvatsku, odnosno je li Komisija predložila Vladi Hrvatske da takav financijski instrument uvrsti u Operativni program za konkurentnost i koheziju i ima li Komisija saznanja da će Vlada Hrvatske to učiniti i u kojem roku?

Odgovor g. Hahna u ime Komisije
(19. svibnja 2014.)

U Hrvatskoj je u tijeku priprema financijskih instrumenata za razdoblje 2014. — 2020. Ministarstvo regionalnog razvoja i fondova Europske unije odgovarajuće je upravljačko tijelo (mogućih) mjera (koje uključuju i financijske instrumente).

Svaki doprinos financijskom instrumentu ESIF-a ([1]) mora biti utemeljen na jasnim dokazima koji su dobiveni *ex-ante* procjenom.

Stoga hrvatska nadležna tijela prije odluke o doprinosu određenom financijskom instrumentu moraju provesti *ex-ante* procjenu. Samo nakon tog prvog koraka moguće je točno procijeniti je li doprinos određenom financijskom instrumentu opravdan. Važan je element u trenutačnoj fazi pripreme široka uključenost svih dionika u tom postupku.

Financijske instrumente potrebno je razvijati u cilju pridonošenja rezultatima koji se odgovarajućim programima žele postići, poput pospješivanja pristupa financiranju MSP-ova (uključujući poduzeća *start-up*), koji je jedan od ključnih prioriteta Europskih strukturnih i investicijskih fondova.

U ožujku 2014. regionalni timovi Grupe Europske investicijske banke održali su s lokalnim upravljačkim tijelima sastanke radionice financijskog inženjeringa, tijekom koji su im opisali mogućnost primjene vlasničkih instrumenata kojima se javno-privatnim partnerstvima potiče ESIF. Na radionicama su hrvatskim nadležnim tijelima predstavljene najbolje prakse i dosadašnji napredak fondova „Eleven and Launchub” te primjenjivost tog modela u Hrvatskoj u okviru novih pravila ESIF-a.

([1]) Europski strukturni i investicijski fondovi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003215/14
to the Commission
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Croatia's preparedness for EU funds for start-up businesses

Through the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the JEREMIE initiative, the EU has funded start-up businesses in Bulgaria to the tune of EUR 21 million. According to information from the EIF, the Acceleration and Seed Fund instrument for small and medium-sized enterprises obtained far and away the best results of all the available financing instruments. Equity financing has proved to be the key to success.

Given the importance of start-up businesses in the Europe 2020 strategy, is such a financial instrument being considered for Croatia?

Has the Commission proposed incorporating such a financial instrument into the 'Regional Competitiveness' Operational Programme to the Croatian Government?

Is the Commission aware of whether the Croatian Government will implement this and, if so, in what time frame?

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

Preparation for the setting-up of financial instruments in Croatia for the 2014-2020 period is under way. The relevant managing authority for the (potential) measures (including financial instruments) is the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds.

Any contribution to an ESIF ([1]) financial instrument must be based on clear evidence provided in an *ex-ante* assessment.

Therefore, the Croatian authorities must carry out the *ex-ante* assessment before deciding to contribute to a financial instrument. It is only when this first step is completed that an accurate assessment can be made whether a contribution to a specific financial instrument is justified. One important element in the current preparation phase is the extensive involvement of all relevant stakeholders in this process.

Financial instruments need to be developed with a view to contributing to the results sought by the relevant programme, such as facilitating SMEs' access to finance (including start-ups), which is among the key priorities of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

European Investment Bank Group regional teams held financial engineering workshop meetings with the local managing authority in March 2014, presenting them the opportunity to deploy equity instruments leveraging ESIF through public-private partnerships. During the workshop the Croatian authorities were introduced to best practices and current progress of 'Eleven and Launchub' funds, as well as applicability of the model in Croatia in the framework of the new ESIF rules.

([1]) European Structural and Investment Funds.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-003216/14
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(19. ožujka 2014.)

Predmet: Suradnja država kandidatkinja i potencijalnih država kandidatkinja u sklopu instrumenta IPA II

Poznato je da bi se reformom obrazovnog sustava moglo odgovoriti na realne tržišne zahtjeve u mnogim državama članicama EU-a, a isto tako i u Bosni i Hercegovini. S obzirom na tešku gospodarsku situaciju diljem Europe neophodno je poboljšati obrazovnu infrastrukturu te komunikaciju malog i srednjeg poduzetništva s obrazovnim sustavom.

Također je poznato da Europska komisija u sklopu pretpristupnog instrumenta (IPA II) osigurava bespovratnu potporu za sve države kandidatkinje i potencijalne države kandidatkinje u okviru programa Erasmus+.

Ravnopravnost punog sudjelovanja u Programu cilj je i zadaća EU-a, a Komisija je više puta istaknula da je za to potrebno osnovati nacionalnu agenciju za provedbu programa Erasmus+, no znamo da u BiH to nije predviđeno.

Što Komisija planira konkretno poduzeti da se u potpunosti implementira i počne provoditi program Erasmus+ u Bosni i Hercegovini s ciljem promjene obrazovne strukture, što bi u konačnici dovelo do smanjenja visoke stope nezaposlenosti, posebice među mladima?

Odgovor g. Fülea u ime Komisije
(26. svibnja 2014.)

Komisija se slaže s Vašom ocjenom važnosti programa u obrazovanju za zemlje Zapadnog Balkana, a posebno za Bosnu i Hercegovinu.

Bosna i Hercegovina ima brojne probleme u pogledu suradnje u okviru nekih programa koje EU nudi s obzirom na njezino složeno ustavno uređenje. Uz intenzivnu pomoć Komisije, država je uspjela prebroditi većinu tih problema te može sudjelovati u gotovo svim aktivnostima programa Erasmus+, za što nije potrebno upravljanje nacionalne agencije.

Kao što je slučaj i s drugim zemljama Zapadnog Balkana, Bosna i Hercegovina nije još uspostavila nacionalnu agenciju za program Erasmus+ niti zatražila potporu Komisije u postizanju tog cilja, stoga ne može potpuno sudjelovati u programu. Samo je bivša jugoslavenska Republika Makedonija okončala postupak uspostave svoje nacionalne agencije te od ove godine potpuno sudjeluje u programu Erasmus+, dok je Srbija zatražila da se postupak pokrene.

Ako Bosna i Hercegovina zatraži pomoć u uspostavljanju nacionalne agencije, Komisija će joj je osigurati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003216/14
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Cooperation with candidate and potential candidate countries supported by the IPA II instrument

It is a well-known fact that reform of the education system could be one way to meet real market demands in many Member States, and the same applies to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Given the difficult economic situation in Europe as a whole, it is essential to upgrade education facilities and improve communication between SMEs and the education system.

It is also common knowledge that the Commission uses the Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA II) to provide grants to all candidate and potential candidate countries for the purposes of the Erasmus+ programme.

Full cooperation on an equal footing under that programme is an aim of, and a task for, the EU, and the Commission has repeatedly stressed that, if this is to happen, national agencies need to be set up to implement the Erasmus+ programme. There are, however, as we know, no plans along those lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What specific steps will the Commission take to ensure that the Erasmus+ programme can be put fully into effect and begin to be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to changing the shape of education and, ultimately, lowering the high unemployment rates and youth unemployment in particular?

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

The Commission concurs with your evaluation of the importance of the programmes in education for the countries of the western Balkans and for Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has numerous problems in cooperating with some of the programmes that the EU has to offer in view of its complex constitutional structure. With intense assistance from the Commission, the country was able to overcome majority of these and is able to participate in most activities of the Erasmus+ programme, which do not require management by a National Agency.

As is the case with other countries in the western Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet set up a National Agency for Erasmus+, nor requested Commission support for doing so and is therefore not able to fully participate in the programme. Only the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has completed the procedures of setting up its National Agency, and is participating fully in Erasmus+ as of this year, while Serbia has requested to start the process.

Once Bosnia and Herzegovina requests assistance in setting up a National Agency, the Commission will provide its support.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003217/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Kontrola ulg podatkowych

Komisarz ds. konkurencji Joaquin Almunia ostrzegł, że ulgi podatkowe dla przedsiębiorstw mogą być sklasyfikowane jako nielegalna pomoc publiczna. W czasie Europejskiego Forum Konkurencji komisarz zapewnił, że nastąpi badanie, czy zwolnienia podatkowe udzielane przez państwa są zgodne z prawem unijnym. Zdaniem Komisji mogą one być rodzajem zachowań antykonkurencyjnych, godzących w zasady jednolitego rynku. Według hiszpańskiego komisarza, wielkie koncerny nie muszą specjalnie obchodzić przepisów, gdyż same przepisy krajowe zezwalają na unikanie podatków.

1. Spore wątpliwości budzą praktyki firm takich jak Starbucks i Apple, które notorycznie wykorzystują luki prawne, aby nie płacić podatków. Jakie działania podejmie Komisja, aby wyeliminować ten proceder?

2. W pierwszej kolejności Komisja będzie badała Irlandię, Holandię i Luksemburg. Kiedy planowane jest zbadanie sytuacji w Polsce?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquina Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(26 maja 2014 r.)

Komisja rzeczywiście zbiera w chwili obecnej informacje na temat zarówno praktyk podejmowania decyzji podatkowych (tzn. decyzji podejmowanych przez organy podatkowe w konkretnych kwestiach podatkowych dotyczących poszczególnych przedsiębiorstw), jak i systemów podatkowych w państwach członkowskich w zakresie własności intelektualnej, aby ocenić ich zgodność z unijnymi przepisami dotyczącymi pomocy państwa. W obwieszczeniu Komisji w sprawie stosowania reguł pomocy publicznej do środków związanych z bezpośrednim opodatkowaniem działalności gospodarczej ([1]) Komisja wskazała już, że w odniesieniu do unijnych przepisów dotyczących pomocy państwa to, czy potencjalny środek pomocy jest środkiem podatkowym, nie ma znaczenia, ponieważ art. 107 TFUE stosuje się do wszystkich środków pomocy w każdej formie. Aby środek mógł zostać uznany za pomoc państwa w rozumieniu art. 107 TFUE, muszą zostać spełnione cztery łączne kryteria pomocy państwa (zasoby państwowe, wybiórcza korzyść, zakłócenie konkurencji, wpływ na wymianę handlową wewnątrz UE).

Z uwagi na dobro wstępnego badania Komisja nie może komentować środków podatkowych lub systemów podatkowych poszczególnych państw członkowskich ani udzielać informacji na temat nazw poszczególnych przedsiębiorstw.

([1]) Dz.U. C 384 z 10.12.1998, s. 3-9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003217/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Controls on tax concessions

Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia has warned that tax breaks for businesses could be classed as illegal state aid. At the European Competition Forum the Competition Commissioner said he would investigate whether tax exemptions granted by the state were in line with EC law. According to the Commission, they could be a form of anti-competitive behaviour which is contrary to the single market principles. The Spanish Commissioner believes that big businesses do not need to make a special effort to evade the laws because the national rules themselves allow for tax evasion.

1. The practices of firms such as Starbucks and Apple, which exploit legal loopholes to avoid paying taxes, raise many questions. What action will the Commission take to eliminate such practices?

2. As a first step, the Commission intends to investigate Ireland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. When does it plan to look at the situation in Poland?

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

The Commission is indeed currently gathering information on both tax ruling practices (i.e. decisions by tax authorities on specific tax matters of individual companies) and intellectual property (IP) tax regimes in Member States, to assess their compliance with EU state aid rules. In the Commission notice on the application of the state aid rules to measures relating to direct business taxation ([1]), the Commission had already indicated that for the EU rules on state aid, it is irrelevant whether a potential aid measure is a tax measure, since Article 107 TFEU applies to aid measures in any form whatsoever. To be considered state aid within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU, the four cumulative state aid criteria must be met (State resources, selective advantage, distortion of competition, effect on intra-EU trade).

In the interest of the preliminary investigation, the Commission cannot comment on tax measures/tax regimes of specific Member States nor on individual company names.

([1]) Official Journal C 384, 10.12.1998, pages 3-9.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003218/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Ogólnoświatowy system zarządzania Internetem

Nowa propozycja Komisji Europejskiej dotyczy stworzenia ogólnoświatowego systemu zasad zarządzania Internetem. Komisarz ds. technologii cyfrowych Neelie Kroes poinformowała o tym 12 lutego. Neelie Kroes powiedziała, że potrzeba reformy wiąże się ze spadkiem zaufania do bezpieczeństwa w sieci.

1. Jakie państwa spoza Unii Europejskiej zamierza zaprosić Komisja do pracy nad ogólnoświatowym systemem zasad zarządzania siecią?

2. Jakie działania zamierza podjąć Komisja, aby zachęcić do zmian państwa, w których Internet jest w rękach władz, takie jak Chiny czy Korea Północna?

3. Czy do współpracy nad projektem zaproszone zostaną inne organizacje?

4. Kto będzie czuwał nad przestrzeganiem nowych zasad zarządzania Internetem?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącą Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(12 maja 2014 r.)

W swoim komunikacie pt. „Polityka wobec Internetu i zarządzanie Internetem" ([1]) Komisja zaproponowała podwaliny nowego europejskiego podejścia do opracowania spójnego zbioru zasad zarządzania Internetem ([2]). Celem jest otwarta sieć, w której przestrzegane są prawa człowieka.

Komisja zamierza podjąć w tej dziedzinie konstruktywną współpracę ze wszystkimi stronami. Musimy włączyć do dialogu wszystkie podmioty, aby każdy mógł dostrzec korzyści wynikające z otwartego podejścia opartego za porozumieniu zainteresowanych stron. Budowanie potencjału w państwach i regionach, w których nie prowadzi się procesów opartych na porozumieniu zainteresowanych stron lub są one słabo rozwinięte, jest niezbędne, aby ustanowić i propagować takie procesy.

Siłą Internetu jest jego otwarty, rozproszony charakter. W zarządzaniu Internetem uczestniczy wiele różnych podmiotów ([3]), powinno więc ono być oparte na autentycznym dialogu zainteresowanych stron. Należy unikać powielania działań, a także wykorzystać technologie informacyjno-komunikacyjne do poszerzenia udziału w zarządzaniu i do poprawy wymiany informacji. Komisja współpracuje z wszystkimi podmiotami na różnych forach i poprosiła Radę oraz Parlament Europejski o wkład do wspólnego europejskiego stanowiska prezentowanego na wszystkich spotkaniach poświęconych tej tematyce. Konferencja NETmundial ([4]), która niedawno odbyła się w Brazylii, jest przykładem udanego zastosowania tego procesu.

Internet jest ekosystemem, w którym wszyscy uczestnicy muszą brać na siebie odpowiedzialność za swoje działania. Aby zapewnić stabilność tego modelu, w uzupełnieniu do przepisów prawnych społeczność międzynarodowa musi wspólnie wzmocnić mechanizmy odpowiedzialności podmiotów w przestrzeni internetowej, w tym w drodze samooceny i wzajemnych przeglądów.

([1]) (COM(2014) 72 final).

([2]) Komisja opowiada się za podejściem określanym akronimem COMPACT. Po raz pierwszy przedstawiono je na posiedzeniu wysokiego szczebla OECD w sprawie gospodarki internetowej,
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/en/blog/i-propose-a-compact-for-the-internet: Internet jako przestrzeń odpowiedzialności obywatelskiej (Civic responsibilities), jeden niepodzielny zasób (One unfragmented resource), zarządzany w sposób oparty na porozumieniu zainteresowanych stron (Multi-stakeholder approach) w celu wspierania demokracji i praw człowieka (Promote democracy and Human Rights) w oparciu o solidną architekturę techniczną (Architecture), która budzi zaufanie (Confidence) i sprzyja przejrzystości zarządzania (Transparent governance) zarówno bazową infrastrukturą Internetu, jak i usługami wykonywanymi przy jej użyciu.

([3]) Zob. np. infografikę nt. organizacji uczestniczących w zarządzaniu Internetem:
http://www.icann.org/sites/default/files/assets/governance-2500x1664-21mar13-en.png.

([4]) Zob. São Paulo multi-stakeholder statement (Oświadczenie zainteresowanych stron z São Paulo); konferencja NETmundial, stanowisko Komisji Europejskiej na temat zasad zarządzania Internetem:
http://content.netmundial.br/contribution/internet-governance-principles/176.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003218/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Global Internet governance system

The Commission has come forward with a new proposal on the creation of a global set of Internet governance principles. Digital Agenda Commissioner Neelie Kroes made a statement on the plans on 12 February, pointing out that the need for reform was linked to a loss of trust in the security of the Internet.

1. Which non-EU countries is the Commission intending to invite to work on this global set of Internet governance principles?

2. What action is the Commission intending to take to promote change in countries in which the authorities control the Internet, such as China and North Korea?

3. Will other organisations be invited to cooperate on the project?

4. Who will be overseeing compliance with the new Internet governance principles?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

The Commission proposed in its communication on Internet Policy and Governance [1] a foundation for a common European approach to the development of a coherent set of Internet governance principles [2] for an open Internet underpinned by human rights.

The Commission intends to work constructively with all parties, on these matters. A more inclusive dialogue with all players is required to ensure that everyone sees the benefits of an open and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach. Engaging in capacity building is also essential in order to establish and promote multi-stakeholder processes in countries and regions where such processes are not or are less developed.

The strength of the Internet lies in its open, distributed nature. Internet governance involves a wide variety of organisations [3] and should therefore be based on genuine multi-stakeholder dialogues, avoiding duplications and using ICTs for better participation and information sharing. The Commission engages with all players in several fora and has invited the Council and the European Parliament to contribute to a common European position in all appropriate venues. The recent NETmundial conference [4] in Brazil was a successful example of this process.

The Internet is an ecosystem in which all participants must take their responsibilities. To ensure the sustainability of this model, it is necessary for the global community to work together to strengthen accountability mechanisms, for actors in the Internet space including through self- and peer-reviews, as a complement to regulation.

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[1] (COM(2014) 72 final).

[2] The Commission has advocated an approach summarised by the COMPACT acronym , first presented at the occasion of the OECD's High-Level Meeting on the Internet Economy (http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/en/blog/i-propose-a-compact-for-the-Internet) the Internet as a space of Civic responsibilities, One unfragmented resource governed via a Multi-stakeholder approach to Promote democracy and Human Rights, based on a sound technological Architecture that engenders Confidence and facilitates a Transparent governance both of the underlying Internet infrastructure and of the services which run on top of it.

[3] See e.g. infographics on organisations involved in Internet governance: http://www.icann.org/sites/default/files/assets/governance-2500x1664-21mar13-en.png

[4] See the Sao Paolo multi-stakeholder statement; see also NETmundial conference ; see also the European Commission contribution on Internet governance principles: http://content.netmundial.br/contribution/Internet-governance-principles/176

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003219/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU action to improve medical research and develop personalised medicines

The Scottish Government has recently announced a funding boost to help deliver a state-of-the-art imaging centre that will help develop personalised medicines and better enable medics to predict which treatments will be most efficient and effective for patients. What is the European Union doing to improve medical research, and to better develop personalised medicines?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(20 May 2014)

The EU's commitment to health research, including medical research, translated into over EUR 6 billion of funding for this thematic priority in the 'Cooperation' Specific Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013). Through the 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing challenge' of Horizon 2020, the EU funding Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014-2020, the EU will spend over EUR 7 billion on health research. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained through the EU Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([1]).

Personalised medicine has increasingly been a focus area for EU health policy development and research funding since 2010 ([2]). The commitment to personalised medicine is set to continue through Horizon 2020. Indeed, the first calls for proposals of Horizon 2020 are focused on research advancing the personalisation of health and care with an overall budget of EUR 1.2 billion ([3]). The Commission will also leverage funding in health research contributing to personalised medicine through its international collaborations with other funders and through the Innovative Medicines Initiative 2, a public-private partnership with the European research-based biopharmaceutical industry.

To date the EU has invested over EUR 1 billion in research underpinning personalised medicine.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html
([2]) See for example the recent European Commission staff working paper that takes stock of the progress made in personalised medicine, and the opportunities and challenges it presents for healthcare systems: http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/latest_news/2013-10_personalised_medicine_en.pdf
([3]) https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/health-demographic-change-and-wellbeing

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003220/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU action to tackle fraud against holidaymakers

A recent police report has shown that people committing fraud are stealing around GBP 7 million a year from holidaymakers. The report showed that 30% of holiday fraud victims in 2013 were scammed by the fraudulent advertisement of holiday villas and apartments, whilst 21% of the scams were related to air ticket fraud. What can the EU do to better tackle this issue?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(11 June 2014)

EU legislation protects consumers against misleading commercial practices and offers specific protection for holiday makers, for example regarding air passenger rights, package travel and timeshare. In addition, Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair business-to-consumer commerical practices in the internal market prevents all traders from engaging in unfair practices towards consumers. It requires traders, including those who market holiday accommodations or airline tickets, to operate in accordance with professional diligence. It also obliges them to provide in a clear, intelligible and timely manner material information that consumers need in order to take an informed purchase decision, such as the main characteristics and the price of a product. It is the responsibility of national authorities to enforce this legislation.

Existing consumer legislation will not be able to prevent fraudulent activities as referred to by the Honourable Member. National consumer authorities however, often in cooperation with police, have developed tools to identify online consumer fraud and to stop it as fast as possible. In addition, the EU Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation offers means to national authorities to cooperate across borders, so as to prevent rogue traders to escape national enforcement actions by relocating to another country.

An important element to limit the damage that consumers suffer from fraud is to improve awareness of online fraud. The Commission is regularly promoting advice on how to avoid it. The European Consumer Centres, co-financed by the EU consumer programme, actively inform citizens on emerging fraud schemes; they issued an EU level report in December 2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1220_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003221/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU action on illicit trade

The Scottish Anti-Illicit Trade Summit took place in Edinburgh on 6 March 2014, bringing together police, trading standards representatives and industry representatives to increase awareness of the dangers of fake products and to encourage consumers to refuse to buy illicit foods, alcohol, fashion products, medicines and beauty products. What is being done by the EU to tackle this global issue?

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

The Commission welcomes efforts to increase awareness of the threat posed by counterfeit goods, including dangers to health and links to organised crime.

EU-level initiatives include the:

— EU Customs Action Plan to combat IPR ([1]) infringements for the years 2013 to 2017 ([2]);

— Regulation 608/2013 concerning customs enforcement of IPR ([3]);

— 2014 — 2017 EU Policy Cycle against serious and organised crime includes a priority on 'counterfeit goods violating health, safety and food regulations' ([4]);

— Action plan to strengthen the fight against fraudulent practices in the food chain initiated by the Commission ([5]);

— Concerning medicinal products, the directive 2011/62/EU ([6]) empowered the Commission to adopt a common logo to be displayed by all legally operating retailers of medicines. The adoption of this logo, planned during 2014, will be accompanied by awareness campaigns on the dangers of the falsified medicines;

— European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights ([7]), which will be complemented by an Action Plan on IP infringing activities being prepared by the Commission;

— Commission's campaign ([8]) directed against illicit trade to raise public awareness; further campaigns will be continued by the European Observatory";

— China, ASEAN and Mercosur IPR SME Helpdesks supporting EU small businesses to protect their original products in China, South-East Asia and South America against illicit copies;

— International dimension is tackled by the Commission through its Trade IPR Dialogues and negotiations on free trade agreements with third countries, including China. The Commission is currently reviewing its 2004 Strategy on IPR in third countries to take into account new digital technologies which may facilitate infringements of IPR.

([1]) Intellectual Property Rights.
([2]) OJ C 80/1 of 19.3.2013.
([3]) OJ L 181/15 of 29.6.2013.
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/137401.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/horsemeat/plan_en.htm
([6]) Directive 2011/62/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8.6.2011 amending Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community Code relating to medicinal products for human use, as regards the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of falsified medicinal products, OJ L 174/74 of 1.7.2011.
([7]) Regulation (EU) No 386/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19.4.2012 entrusted the Observatory to the Office for Harmonisation in the internal market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM), OJ L 129/1 of 16.5.2012.
([8]) 'Too good to be true? The real price of fake products'.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003222/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU and video games industry

The city of Dundee in Scotland has developed a worldwide reputation as a centre of the video games industry. What does the EU do to support the video games industry across the EU?

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

Support for the industry in general is one of the Commission's priorities ([1]). SMEs in particular have been mainstreamed into the industrial policy approach. The new instruments, COSME and Horizon 2020 provide funding in support of entrepreneurship and SMEs, including dedicated financial instruments ([2]) and specific actions in relation to ICT and creative industries (including gaming).

Creative Europe, with its total budget of EUR 1.46 billion, offers specific support for the development of video games.

Additionally, on 13 May 2014, the Commission organised a workshop on the spillovers of the creative industries (including the video games industry) to other sectors of the economy. It stressed the role and further potential of creative industries in triggering innovation in other sectors and the importance of developing an EU policy aiming at creating and strengthening links between creative industries and the economy at large.

([1]) See the recent Communication for a European Industrial Renaissance of 22.1.2014.
([2]) The Loan Guarantee Facility and the Equity Facility for Growth.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003223/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU monitoring of greenhouse gases

Greenhouse gas emissions from Scotland's power stations have fallen by more than a third in five years, according to recent figures. Emissions have dropped from the equivalent of 18 484 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2006 to the equivalent of 12 147 million tonnes in 2011. What is the EU doing to monitor greenhouse gas emissions, which are hopefully decreasing across the EU in line with the aims of Europe 2020?

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

Member States monitor their emissions and report annually to the European Commission greenhouse gas inventories, prepared in full compliance with the reporting requirements agreed under the Unfccc since 1992. The European Union recently strengthened these rules by adopting on 21 May 2013 the Monitoring Mechanism Regulation ('MMR') No 525/2013/EU. The European Environment Agency compiles the Union greenhouse gas inventory and performs the appropriate quality assurance and quality control procedures.

The most recent emission data for the year 2012 confirms that the EU and its Member States will meet their emission reduction commitments for the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period 2008-2012 by a wide margin. Greenhouse gas emissions of the 28 Member States of the EU have decreased by 19% while GDP has grown by more than 44%. Furthermore, according to the current projections, the EU and its Member States are on track to meet their emission reduction commitments for the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period 2012-2020 which are in line with the European Union's 20% emission reduction target set under the 2020 Climate and Energy package. Further details on the progress of the EU and its Member States towards their targets are available in the Commission's annual Progress Report ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/docs/com_2013_698_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003224/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: EU research to help remote parts of developing countries

Research conducted by the University of Edinburgh, in collaboration with the Italian National Research Council's IAE research institute, has suggested that solar fridges could play a vital role in helping aid workers get life-saving vaccines to people in remote parts of developing countries. To what extent does the European Union work with universities to help develop research which aims to improve the situation in remote parts of developing countries?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

The EU has supported through FP7 ([1]) cooperation between European researchers and researchers from developing countries in order to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments such as Rio+20. Over EUR 175 million has been granted to more than 824 developing country participants from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Southern Mediterranean who participate in some 282 Specific International Cooperation Action research projects.

For example, universities in Benin, Senegal, the UK, Portugal and other countries cooperated in the FP7 AFTER project ([2]) focused on improving the processing of African fermented foods. Research organisations and universities from Ethiopia, Morocco, Germany, Spain and other countries collaborated in the CLARA project ([3]) and developed a simplified planning tool for integrated water supply and sanitation systems for small communities in Africa. The first 'European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership' (EDCTP1, 2003-2013) ([4]) also financed research involving universities from Uganda, Nigeria, the UK, Germany and other countries on three novel drugs to treat children with uncomplicated malaria.

Horizon 2020, the new EU funding programme for research and innovation (2014-2020), is open to collaboration between European and developing country entities, including universities.

European Development Cooperation Instruments (EDF, DCI) have provided over EUR 78 million of funding for research involving universities in developing countries over the last five years, notably to improve health systems and ultimately ensure better delivery and outreach of health services in developing countries.

([1]) Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([2]) http://www.after-fp7.eu/en
([3]) http://clara.boku.ac.at/
([4]) http://www.edctp.org/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003226/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Fair trade within the EU

In 2013 Scotland became one of the world's first fair trade nations. The accolade means people, government, businesses, public bodies and community organisations across Scotland have come together to meet stringent criteria designed to promote fair trade. What does the European Union do to further the cause of fair trade within the EU?

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

The Commission's approach to ethical trade and sustainable production and consumption issues is set out in the communication on fair trade and trade-related sustainability assurance schemes ([1]). The Commission welcomes initiatives promoting these schemes, including the Fairtrade trademark, as they make an important contribution to advancing sustainable development and to giving public authorities, companies and consumers the choice to make a difference in this respect.

The EU has undertaken a number of initiatives in this area:

The revised Public Procurement Directive allows contracting authorities in the EU to require that works, supplies or services bear specific labels certifying environmental, social or other characteristics, as long as it is done in a non-discriminatory manner so that only the criteria and characteristics of the label are required and equivalent labels are accepted.

The EU supports fair trade, cooperatives and smallholder farmers in developing countries through various grant schemes. It also supports awareness-raising and educational activities by non-state actors in EU Member States, as well as activities supporting market transparency of voluntary standards schemes in the EU.

([1]) COM(2009) 215 final — Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee Contributing to Sustainable Development: The role of Fair Trade and Nongovernmental Trade-related Sustainability Assurance Schemes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003227/14
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Improving wi-fi infrastructure in the EU

Transport Scotland has recently announced that rail passengers at more than 50 stations across Scotland will be able to access free wi-fi by next spring. This will allow passengers to continue their busy lives while travelling, and enable visitors to Scotland to have a good experience of the rail network. What is the EU doing to encourage greater wi-fi infrastructure development in the EU?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 May 2014)

The Commission welcomes initiative like this one in Scotland. It should be noted that the prerequisite for any Wi-Fi offering is a functioning and sufficiently fast fixed broadband network.

As the Honourable Member is aware, the Union has been very active in promoting the build-out of broadband networks. Wi-Fi is a cost-effective way of quickly transferring wireless data traffic of multiple users to the fixed network. The Union encourages provision of Wi-Fi services through harmonisation measures to ensure that sufficient suitable radio spectrum is available throughout Europe.

The subsequent decision to offer Wi-Fi, or as in this case free Wi-Fi, is a commercial decision, either by a telecoms operator or by any business or individual, to enhance the overall user experience. The Commission draws your attention to its proposal for a Telecoms Single Market Regulation, which the Parliament voted on in first reading on 3 April. Article 14 of the draft regulation aims at removing barriers for the deployment of Radio LANs (Wi-Fi) whatever business model is chosen.

The Commission and the Parliament are in agreement on this subject and it is currently being actively discussed in the Council.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003410/14
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 mars 2014)

Objet: Union européenne et minerais du sang

La proposition législative de la Commission européenne relative à l'approvisionnement responsable en minerais provenant de zones de conflit n'est pas suffisamment stricte pour garantir que les entreprises européennes qui achètent ces minerais ne participent pas au financement de conflits ou de violations des droits humains.

Au lieu de mettre en avant une législation solide, qui obligerait de nombreuses entreprises européennes à exercer leur «devoir de diligence» en contrôlant leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement, la Commission européenne a annoncé, il y a quelques jours, la mise en place de mesures volontaires qui ne s'appliqueront qu'aux entreprises important des minerais transformés et bruts sur le marché européen. La proposition concerne les entreprises actives dans les secteurs de l'étain, du tantale, du tungstène et de l'or.

Pourquoi la Commission a-t-elle opté pour une adhésion au mécanisme sur la base volontaire d'une certification propre et pour un nombre limité d'entreprises? En effet, cela n'aura probablement pas d'impact significatif sur les méthodes d'approvisionnement en ressources naturelles de la plupart des entreprises européennes.

La Commission a-t-elle conscience qu'avec cette proposition, l'Union européenne envoie le message qu'il est acceptable pour les entreprises de ne pas opter pour un comportement responsable? Comment la Commission se justifie-t-elle?

Réponse commune donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(6 mai 2014)

La Commission et le Haut Représentant ont présenté une stratégie intégrée de l'UE ([1]) visant à mettre fin à l'utilisation des profits résultant du commerce de minerais pour financer des conflits armés.

À cet effet, la Commission a adopté une proposition de règlement ([2]) instaurant un mécanisme européen d'autocertification à l'intention des importateurs d'étain, de tantale, de tungstène et d'or qui choisissent d'importer ces minerais dans l'Union de manière responsable. Bien que l'autocertification soit volontaire, une fois qu'un importateur de l'UE décide d'opter pour celle-ci, il y a des mesures obligatoires à mettre en œuvre.

Comme l'indique l'analyse d'impact sur laquelle repose la proposition de règlement, d'autres systèmes obligatoires en vigueur ont eu des conséquences socio-économiques imprévues et ont découragé les approvisionnements auprès d'entreprises situées dans des régions en proie à des conflits. De ce fait, les communautés minières locales sont confrontées à une baisse de la demande et elles sont en mauvaise position pour négocier avec les acheteurs: l'absence de perspectives économiques aggrave la situation des nombreuses communautés qui sont la proie de groupes armés.

Le projet de règlement prévoit qu'au plus tard trois ans après son entrée en vigueur, la Commission examine le fonctionnement et l'efficacité de ce règlement. Les rapports peuvent être accompagnés, si nécessaire, de propositions législatives appropriées, qui peuvent comporter de nouvelles mesures obligatoires.

Enfin, une série de mesures incitatives appuient le règlement dans son objectif d'encourager les entreprises de l'UE à déployer toute la diligence requise. Notamment, les procédures de passation de marchés publics de la Commission pour tous les produits contenant de l'étain, du tantale, du tungstène et de l'or constituent autant de mesures incitatives en ce sens.

([1]) JOIN(2014) 8.
([2]) COM(2014) 111.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-003229/14
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(19 ta' Marzu 2014)

Suġġett: Id-divulgazzjoni tal-oriġini ta' minerali ta' kunflitt

Dan l-aħħar il-Kummissjoni pproponiet li l-UE titlob lill-importaturi Ewropej ta' deheb, landa, tungstenu u tantalju — erba' metalli u minerali li frekwentement jinsabu f'żoni ta' gwerra — biex jiddivulgaw l-oriġini tal-istokkijiet tagħhom [1]. Madankollu, il-proposta ma tindika ebda obbligu għall-importaturi li jagħmlu dan, li wassal għall-ħolqien ta' kritika minn korpi oħrajn tal-UE.

Fl-2010 l-Istati Uniti tal-Amerika adottat liġi simili, iżda aktar ħarxa, li tirrikjedi lill-importaturi tal-erba' metalli msemmija hawn fuq biex jiddivulgaw l-oriġini tagħhom.

Għalfejn il-Kummissjoni naqset milli tinkludi kwalunkwe obbligu fil-proposta?

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

Il-Kummissjoni u r-Rappreżentant Għoli ppreżentaw approċċ integrat tal-UE [2] biex iwaqqfu l-profitti mill-kummerċ fil-minerali li qed jintużaw biex jiffinanzjaw kunflitti bl-armi.

Għal dan il-għan, il-Kummissjoni adottat proposta għal Regolament [3] li jistabbilixxi sistema ta' awtoċertifikazzjoni tal-UE għall-importaturi tal-landa, tat-tantalju, tat-tungstenu u tad-deheb li jagħżlu li jimpurtawhom b'mod responsabbli fl-UE. Għalkemm l-awtoċertifikazzjoni hija fuq bażi volontarja, ladarba importatur tal-UE jiddeċiedi li jadottaha hemm miżuri obbligatorji li għandhom jiġu implimentati.

Kif spjegat fil-valutazzjoni tal-impatt li hija l-bażi tal-abbozz tar-Regolament, sistemi oħra obbligatorji fis-seħħ kellhom konsegwenzi soċjoekonomiċi mhux intenzjonati u ma inċentivawx l-esternalizzar tan-negozju minn reġjuni li jinsabu f'kunflitti. Għaldaqstant, komunitajiet ta' estrazzjoni lokali qegħdin jaffaċċjaw domanda mnaqqsa u jsibu ruħhom f'pożizzjoni dgħajfa ta' negozjar fil-konfront tax-xerrejja: in-nuqqas ta' opportunità ekonomika jżid in-numru ta' komunitajiet attakkati minn gruppi armati.

L-abbozz tar-Regolament jipprevedi li, mhux aktar tard minn tliet snin wara li jidħol fis-seħħ, il-Kummissjoni għandha teżamina mill-ġdid il-funzjonament u l-effikaċja ta' dan ir-Regolament. Ir-rapporti jistgħu jkunu akkumpanjati, jekk meħtieġ, minn proposti leġiżlattivi adegwati, li jistgħu jinkludu miżuri obbligatorji.

Fl-aħħar nett, għadd ta' inċentivi qed jappoġġjaw ir-Regolament biex jippromwovu l-adozzjoni tad-diliġenza dovuta minn kumpaniji tal-UE. B'mod partikolari il-proċeduri ta' akkwist pubbliku tal-Kummissjoni għall-prodotti kollha li fihom landa, tantalju, tungstenu u deheb huma inċentiv qawwi għal dan il-għan.

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[1] http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2014/march/metals-and-minerals-proposal-causes-conflict/79913.aspx
[2] JOIN(2014) 8.
[3] COM (2014) 111.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003229/14
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Disclosure of the origin of conflict minerals

The Commission has recently proposed that the EU call on European importers of gold, tin, tungsten and tantalum — four metals and minerals frequently found in war zones — to disclose the origin of their stocks ([1]). However, the proposal does not outline any obligations for importers to do so, which has triggered criticism from other EU bodies.

In 2010 the USA adopted a similar, but harsher, law which requires importers of the above-mentioned four metals to disclose the origins thereof.

Why did the Commission refrain from including any obligations in the proposal?

Question for written answer E-003410/14
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: The EU and blood minerals

The Commission's legislative proposal on the sustainable supply of minerals from conflict zones is not rigorous enough to provide any guarantees that European companies' mineral purchases are not funding conflicts or human rights violations.

Instead of proposing a robust piece of legislation which would force a large number of European companies to exercise 'due diligence' by monitoring their supply chains, a few days ago the Commission announced its intention to introduce voluntary measures which will only apply to companies that import raw and processed minerals onto the European market. The proposal affects companies in the tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold sectors.

Why has the Commission decided to introduce a system whereby only a limited number of companies are asked to perform voluntary self-certification? It will probably not have a significant impact on most European companies' approach to natural resource procurement.

Does the Commission not recognise that, through this proposal, the EU is sending a message that it is acceptable for companies not to behave responsibly? How can the Commission justify such a stance?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 2014)

The Commission and the High Representative presented an integrated EU approach ([2]) to stop profits from trade in minerals being used to finance armed conflicts.

To this end, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation ([3]) setting up an EU system of self-certification for importers of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold who choose to import responsibly into the EU. Though the self-certification is voluntary, once an EU importer decides to opt in there are mandatory measures to implement.

As explained in the impact assessment underpinning the draft Regulation, other mandatory systems in force have had unintended socioeconomic consequences and have disincentivised sourcing by business from conflict regions. As a consequence, local mining communities are faced with depressed demand and placed in a weak bargaining position vis-à-vis buyers: the lack of economic opportunity exacerbates the lot of communities preyed upon by armed groups.

([1]) http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2014/march/metals-and-minerals-proposal-causes-conflict/79913.aspx
([2]) JOIN(2014) 8.
([3]) COM(2014) 111.

The draft regulation foresees that no later than three years after entering into force the Commission should review the functioning and the effectiveness of the regulation. The reports may be accompanied, if necessary, by appropriate legislative proposals, which may include further mandatory measures.

Finally, a series of incentives are supporting the regulation to promote the uptake of due diligence by EU companies. Notably the Commission's public procurement procedures for all products containing tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold is a powerful incentive to this end.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-003230/14
lill-Kummissjoni (Viċi President/Rappreżentant Għoli)
David Casa (PPE)
(19 ta' Marzu 2014)

Suġġett: VP/HR — L-elezzjonijiet fit-Turkija

Il-protesti li reġgħu bdew reċentement fit-Turkija wara l-mewt ta' tifel ta' 15-il sena issa wasslu għall-mewt ta' żewġt irġiel. Billi l-protestanti għadhom jinsabu fit-toroq, qed jingħad li hemm il-korruzzjoni fost l-uffiċjali tal-Gvern, u l-elezzjonjiet fit-Turkija waslu dalwaqt, ir-Rappreżentant Għoli għamlet xi valutazzjoni dwar il-possibilità ta' eskalazzjoni fil-vjolenza wara li jsiru l-elezzjonijiet?

Tweġiba mogħtija mir-Rappreżentant Għoli/il-Viċi President Ashton f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(13 ta' Ġunju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni qed issegwi mill-qrib is-sitwazzjoni fit-Turkija ta' qabel u ta' wara l-elezzjonijiet muniċipali. Wara l-żviluppi ġenerali preokkupanti li seħħew matul l-aħħar tliet xhur, il-Kummissjoni tisħaq li t-Turkija jeħtiġilha tilħaq liċ-ċittadini kollha, inklużi dawk li mhumiex parti mill-vot tal-maġġoranza, sabiex ikun hemm l-iktar involviment b'saħħtu possibbli għar-riformi meħtieġa ħalli jitjiebu l-istat tad-dritt u d-drittijiet fundamentali, kif ukoll sabiex isir progress fil-proċess ta' adeżjoni mal-UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003230/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Casa (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Elections in Turkey

The recent renewal of protests in Turkey following the death of a 15-year-old boy has now claimed the lives of two men. Given that protesters are still out in the streets, there is talk of corruption among government officials, and the Turkish elections are coming up very soon, has the High Representative made any assessment of the potential for an escalation in violence following the elections?

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

The Commission has been looking closely at the situation in Turkey before and after the municipal elections. Following the overall worrying developments which took place over the past three months, the Commission stresses that Turkey needs to reach out to all citizens, including those who are not part of the majority vote, in order to build the strongest possible engagement on reforms needed to enhance rule of law and fundamental rights and make progress in the EU accession process.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-003231/14
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(19 ta' Marzu 2014)

Suġġett: Il-ħarsien tal-istat tad-dritt

Il-proċess fi tliet stadji li ġie suġġerit dan l-aħħar biex jiżgura aktar il-ħarsien tal-istat tad-dritt fl-Ewropa huwa maħsub biex iservi ta' twissija għal dawk l-Istati Membri li l-azzjonijiet tagħhom ikunu meqjusa riskjużi.

Filwaqt li wieħed jifhem li l-perjodu ta' żmien meħtieġ biex jitwettqu t-tliet stadji mistenni jvarja minn każ għal ieħor, ġie stabbilit perjodu ta' żmien speċifiku bħala l-perjodu ta' żmien massimu allokat għal dan l-iskop?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Hahn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(6 ta' Mejju 2014)

Fl-11 ta' Marzu 2014 il-Kummissjoni adottat Komunikazzjoni "Qafas ġdid tal-UE biex jissaħħaħ l-Istat tad-Dritt". L-għan ta' dan il-qafas huwa li nindirizzaw it-theddidiet lejn l-istat tad-dritt li huma ta' natura sistematika permezz ta' skambju strutturat mal-Istat Membru konċernat. Il-Qafas jintroduċi proċess fi tliet stadji. L-ebda massimu ta' żmien mhuwa stabbilit biex jitlestew l-istadji differenti tal-proċess peress li ż-żmien meħtieġ se jvarja skont is-sitwazzjoni konkreta inkwistjoni u kif tevolvi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003231/14
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Protecting the rule of law

The newly suggested three-step process to further ensure the protection of the rule of law in Europe is meant to serve as a warning to Member States whose actions are seen as risky.

While it is understood that the period of time required to carry out the three steps is expected to vary from case to case, has a specific period of time been set as the maximum time frame allowed for this purpose?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 2014)

On 11 March 2014 the Commission adopted a communication 'A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law'. The purpose of the framework is to address threats to the rule of law which are of a systemic nature by means of a structured exchange with the Member State concerned. The framework introduces a three stage process. No maximum time frame is set to complete the different stages of the process as the time required will vary depending on the concrete situation at stake and how it evolves.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-003232/14
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(19 ta' Marzu 2014)

Suġġett: Sħubija Transatlantika ta' Kummerċ u ta' Investiment (TTIP)

Għal darb'oħra ostaklu ieħor għas-Sħubija Transatlantika ta' Kummerċ u ta' Investiment (TTIP) ġie enfasizzat f'rapport ippubblikat dan l-aħħar online. Din id-darba, il-kunflitt jinvolvi l-kunfidenza tal-konsumaturi fi prodotti agrikoli Amerikani u Ewropej.

Jidher li l-liġijiet tal-UE li jiżguraw li l-ismijiet tal-prodotti juru b'mod ċar l-oriġini tagħhom tippreżenta sors ta' problemi potenzjali għall-produtturi Amerikani, li jkollhom ibiddlu l-ismijiet tal-prodotti tagħhom.

Senaturi u produtturi ta' prodotti agrikoli fl-Istati Uniti qed jargumentaw li l-bidla tal-ismijiet tal-prodotti tagħhom twassal għal telf ta' għarfien u kunfidenza tal-konsuamturi fil-marka tal-prodotti tagħhom ([1]).

X'suġġerimenti, jekk hemm, ressqet il-Kummissjoni dwar kif l-aħjar tkun ittrattata din il-kwistjoni sabiex ma tfixkilx in-negozjati kummerċjali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Ciolos f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(15 ta' Mejju 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni taf bil-pożizzjonijiet negattivi meħudin pubblikament minn għadd ta' Senaturi Amerikani u gruppi tal-produtturi dwar il-protezzjoni tal-indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi fil-kuntest tan-negozjati dwar is-Sħubija Trans-Atlantika ta' Kummerċ u ta' Investiment (TTIP) bejn l-UE u l-Istati Uniti. Il-Kummissjoni taf ukoll li fl-Istati Uniti hemm min qed jappoġġa bis-sħiħ l-approċċ tal-indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi u qed isejjaħ għal protezzjoni aħjar ta' dan id-dritt partikulari tal-proprjetà intellettwali fit-territorju tal-Istati Uniti. Dawn huma gruppi ta' produtturi li jagħrfu l-valur ta' dak l-approċċ għan-negozji tagħhom, kemm fis-suq domestiku Amerikan u kemm fir-rigward tas-swieq tal-esportazzjoni. Dan ma jvarjax mill-interessi li esprimew il-gruppi ta' produtturi tal-UE li jippromwovu l-indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi.

Għalhekk, il-Kummissjoni se tkompli tfittex eżitu ambizzjuż għall-indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi tal-UE fil-qafas ta' dawn in-negozjati. Is-suq Amerikan huwa wieħed mill-iktar swieq sinifikanti għall-esportazzjoni ta' prodotti tal-ikel ta' kwalità u ta' protezzjoni tal-oriġini tal-UE. Protezzjoni msaħħa ta' ismijiethom żgur li tikkontribwixxi biex trawwem tkabbir sostnut ta' dawk il-flussi tal-esportazzjoni u jkollha impatt pożittiv fuq l-impjiegi fiż-żoni rurali. Hija u tfittex li tilħaq dan l-għan, b'mod pragmatiku l-UE qed tfittex regoli li jiggarantixxu livell xieraq ta' protezzjoni u l-infurzar xieraq ta' dik il-protezzjoni għal ċerti listi tal-indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi. Dawn il-listi jistgħu jinkludu indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi tal-UE u tal-Istati Uniti. Il-Kummissjoni hija lesta tqis arranġamenti speċifiċi fil-każ ta' għadd limitat ta' ismijiet li jistgħu jkunu f'kunflitt mad-drittijiet jew l-użu eżistenti fit-territorji rispettivi.

([1]) http://www.euractiv.com/cap/us-senators-shocked-eu-cheese-na-news-534077

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003232/14
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Yet another obstacle for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) was highlighted in a report recently published online. This time, the conflict involves consumer confidence in both American and European farm products.

It seems that EC laws which ensure that products' names accurately depict their origins represent a source of potential problems for American producers, who would be forced to change their products' names.

Senators and producers of farm products in the US are arguing that changing their products' names would lead to a loss of consumer recognition of, and confidence in, their brands ([1]).

What suggestions, if any, has the Commission made on how to best address this issue so that it does not hinder the trade negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Ciolos on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2014)

The Commission is aware of the negative positions taken publicly by a number of U.S. Senators and producer groups *vis-à-vis* the protection of geographical indications in the context of negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the U.S. The Commission is equally aware that there are voices in the U.S. strongly supporting the geographical indications' approach and advocating a better protection for this particular intellectual property right in the U.S. territory. These are producer groups recognising the value of that approach for their business, whether domestically in the U.S. or *vis-à-vis* export markets. This is not different from the interests expressed by EU producer groups promoting geographical indications.

Therefore, the Commission will continue to pursue an ambitious outcome for EU geographical indications within the framework of these negotiations. The US market is one of the most significant for the export of EU quality and origin food products. An enhanced protection of their names would certainly contribute to foster a sustained growth of those export flows with a positive impact in employment in rural areas. In pursuing this objective, the EU is pragmatically looking for rules guaranteeing an appropriate level of protection and an appropriate enforcement of that protection for selected lists of geographical indications. These lists could include EU and U.S. geographical indications. The Commission is ready to consider specific arrangements in the case of a limited number of names which might conflict with existing rights or uses in respective territories.

([1]) http://www.euractiv.com/cap/us-senators-shocked-eu-cheese-na-news-534077

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-003234/14
à la Commission
François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(19 mars 2014)

Objet: Droits de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale (Grèce)

Les membres de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale ont le droit d'établir, de gérer et de contrôler, à leurs propres frais, toute institution caritative, religieuse ou sociale, ainsi que toute école ou autre établissement d'enseignement, avec le droit d'y faire librement usage de leur propre langue et d'y pratiquer librement leur religion, conformément à la section III (articles 37 à 45) du traité, relative à la protection des minorités.

La Grèce est un pays démocratique qui assure actuellement la présidence du Conseil de l'Union européenne, pour la cinquième fois depuis son adhésion à l'Union en 1981. Toutefois, il semble que la Grèce ne respecte pas le droit à l'auto-identification à titre collectif ou le droit d'assemblée ou d'association des membres de la minorité turque, qui cherchent à établir leur identité, et ce en dépit des arrêts rendus par la Cour européenne des Droits de l'homme (CEDH) à son encontre. Depuis quelques années, les membres de la minorité turque ne peuvent pas élire leurs propres chefs religieux, les muftis étant nommés par l'État grec au motif que ceux-ci détiennent une autorité judiciaire sur les questions civiques. Les enfants de la minorité turque ne bénéficient pas du droit à recevoir un enseignement préscolaire dans leur langue maternelle et la Grèce, du fait qu'elle ne traite pas avec respect les enfants des minorités qui parlent une autre langue que le grec, enfreint le droit à ne pas faire l'objet d'une discrimination, sans justification objective et raisonnable. Ces faits constituent une discrimination et sont contraires à l'article 10 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, aux articles 10, 12, 14, 21, 22 et 24 de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, et aux articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 et 22 de la convention-cadre du Conseil de l'Europe pour la protection des minorités nationales, que la Grèce a signée mais pas encore ratifiée.

1. Que compte faire la Commission pour garantir les droits des membres de la minorité turque en Thrace occidentale, conformément au traité de Lisbonne et à la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, lorsque la Grèce met en œuvre la législation de l'Union ou lorsque qu'elle bénéficie de fonds de l'Union?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(19 juin 2014)

La Commission veille à ce que les États membres respectent les droits fondamentaux, y compris le principe de non-discrimination défini à l'article 21 de la charte, lorsqu'ils appliquent le droit de l'UE. En outre, la législation et les programmes de financement de l'UE contribuent à remédier à certains problèmes pouvant toucher les personnes appartenant à des minorités, tels que la discrimination et l'incitation à la violence ou à la haine fondée sur la race ou l'origine nationale ou ethnique ([1]).

La Commission soutient également des projets portant sur les langues régionales et minoritaires au moyen de divers programmes, notamment dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la formation, de la culture et de la jeunesse. En particulier, le programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie finance des projets visant à promouvoir l'apprentissage des langues et la diversité linguistique, aussi bien dans le cadre des différents sous-programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci ou Grundtvig) qu'au titre de son volet transversal (activité clé n° 2 «Langues»).

([1]) Pour en savoir plus, veuillez consulter le site web de la DG Justice: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003234/14
to the Commission
François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Rights of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Greece

Members of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Greece have the right to establish, manage and control, at their own expense, any charitable, religious or social institution, as well as any school or other establishment for instruction and education, along with the right to use their own language and exercise their own religion freely therein, under Section III (Articles 37 to 45) of the Treaty which deals with the protection of minorities.

Greece is a democratic country which now holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the fifth time since its accession to the EU in 1981. The country does not, however, respect the right of self-identification on a collective basis or the right of assembly or association of members of the Turkish minority, which are seeking to establish their identity, despite rulings by the European Court of Human Rights against Greece. For some years, members of the Turkish minority have not been able to elect their own religious leaders, but rather the Greek State appoints muftis, on the grounds that they hold judicial authority on civic issues. The right to be educated in their mother tongue at pre-school is not granted to Turkish minority children, and the right not to be discriminated against is violated owing to the fact that Greece, without objective and reasonable justification, fails to treat with consideration minority children who speak a language other than Greek. These constitute instances of discrimination, and are in contravention of Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Articles 10, 12, 14, 21, 22 and 24 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and Articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 22 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which Greece has signed but has not yet ratified.

1. What does the Commission intend to do to guarantee the rights of members of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, when Greece implements EC law or where EU funding is provided?

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

The Commission ensures that Member States, when implementing EC law, respect fundamental rights, including the principle of non-discrimination provided in Article 21 of the Charter. Furthermore, EU legislation and financing programmes contribute to address certain difficulties which are likely to affect persons belonging to minorities, such as discrimination and incitement to violence or hatred based on race or national or ethnic origin ([1]).

The Commission also supports projects related to regional and minority languages through a variety of programmes, including in areas such as education and training, culture and youth support. In particular, the Lifelong Learning Programme finances projects to promote language learning and linguistic diversity, either through the different sub-programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig) or through its transversal programme (key activity 2 'Languages').

([1]) For further information, please see DG Justice website at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-003235/14
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(19. marts 2014)

Om: Slagterilukninger

I Kommissionens svar til mig 28.2.2014 (P-000879/2014) fremgår det, at den ikke har hørt om eller kender til de problematiske vilkår i den tyske slagteribranche. Jeg vil gerne hjælpe Kommissionen med at få mere viden, så jeg kan gentage mit spørgsmål:

Kan Kommissionen garantere, at alt foregår efter reglerne på de tyske slagterier? Er regler om for eksempel arbejdsmiljø overholdt? Gives der ulovlig eller konkurrenceforvridende statsstøtte for eksempel gennem særlige rabatordninger for el-forbrug? Behandles den vandrende arbejdskraft efter reglerne?

Som jeg forstår det, er der bestemt behov for, at Kommissionen kigger nærmere på konkurrencevilkårene i den tyske slagteribranche. Undrer det ikke Kommissionen, at Tyskland kan drive slagterier på en måde, der gør dem mere konkurrencedygtige end slagterier i Danmark, Holland, Belgien og Frankrig?

Som jeg forstår det, så gives der støtte til slagterierne gennem en særlig rabat på el-omkostningerne. Især hvis virksomhederne kan dokumentere, at el-udgiften er særlig høje (over 14 % af de samlede udgifter). Det har fået visse tyske slagterier til at udnytte ordningen. Først fyrer de ansatte og erstatter dem med vikarer eller udstationeret arbejdskraft. På den måde er lønnen ikke løn, men en serviceydelse, som virksomheden betaler til en tredje part. Det gør, at ydelsen kan trækkes fra i skat. Pludselig er el-udgiften i virksomhedens regnskab blevet relativt større.

Jeg vil gerne spørge Kommissionen, om den synes, det er en lovlig model? Er der tale om lovlig statsstøtte?

Hvis ja, synes Kommissionen så, at det er en fair model? Her er ikke tale om diskrimination af udenlandske borgere, men af indenlandske arbejdstagere. Og samtidigt er der tale om unfair konkurrence.

Mener Kommissionen stadig, at der ikke er behov for et eftersyn af slagteribranchens konkurrencevilkår?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Joaquín Almunia
(7. maj 2014)

Kommissionen er bekendt med de rabatter, som det ærede medlem henviser til. De vedrører den afgift, som Tyskland har indført for el-forbrugere for at finansiere understøttelsen af vedvarende energikilder (den såkaldte »EEG-Umlage«).

Tyskland har også indført rabatter på afgiften for visse sektorer og virksomheder. Nedslagene afhænger af forbruget, og hvor el-intensiv virksomheden er.

Den 18. december 2013 indledte Kommissionen en formel undersøgelsesprocedure af disse rabatter i Tyskland, idet det ikke kunne fastslås, om de var i overensstemmelse med statsstøttereglerne. I mellemtiden har kommissærkollegiet i princippet vedtaget nye retningslinjer for energi- og miljøstøtte (pressemeddelelse IP/14/400). De indeholder kriterier for, hvornår der kan gives rabatter på afgifter til fremme af vedvarende energikilder. Kommissionen vil vurdere rabatterne i Tyskland i lyset af disse kriterier, når retningslinjerne er formelt vedtaget.

For så vidt angår outsourcing af arbejde med henblik på kunstigt at nedbringe, hvor el-intensiv en virksomhed er, lader det til, at dette problem i Tyskland skyldes, hvordan man har defineret begrebet el-intensiv (Strohmintensiv) i lovgivningen. Kommissionen vil undersøge dette spørgsmål.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003235/14
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Slaughterhouse closures

It appears from the Commission's answer to my question of 28 February 2014 (P-000879/2014) that the Commission has not heard of, or is not aware of, the problematic conditions in the German slaughterhouse industry. I am happy to provide the Commission with more information, so that I can restate my question:

Can the Commission give an assurance that German slaughterhouses are operating entirely by the book? Are the rules on the working environment, for example, being complied with? Is any unlawful or competition-distorting state aid going to slaughterhouses, e.g. via special discounts for electricity consumption? Are migrant workers being treated in compliance with the rules?

It seems to me that the Commission certainly needs to look more closely at the competitive situation in the German slaughterhouse sector. Does the Commission not wonder how Germany can operate slaughterhouses in a way which makes them more competitive than those in Denmark, Holland, Belgium or France?

As I understand it, aid is given to slaughterhouses via a special discount on electricity prices, specifically if firms can show that their electricity costs are particularly high (over 14% of total expenditure). This has led some German slaughterhouses to exploit the system. First of all they dismiss their employees and replace them with temporary or posted workers. This enables wages not to count as wages but as a service for which the firm makes payments to a third party, which can then be deducted from tax. As a result, electricity costs suddenly become a relatively significant item in the firm's accounts.

Does the Commission think this is a lawful business model? Does it constitute lawful state aid?

If so, does the Commission think it is a fair business model? It involves discrimination, not against foreign citizens but against the country's own workers, as well as unfair competition.

Does the Commission still think there is no need for surveillance of the competitive situation in the slaughterhouse industry?

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

The Commission is aware of the reductions described by the Honourable Member. They relate to the surcharge that in Germany is imposed on electricity consumers to finance the support of renewables (so-called 'EEG surcharge').

Germany has introduced reduced surcharge rates for certain sectors and undertakings. The reduced rates depend on the consumption and electro-intensity of the undertakings.

On 18 December 2013 the Commission opened the formal investigation procedure regarding these reductions in Germany as their compatibility with state aid rules could not be established. In the meantime the College has adopted in principle new Guidelines for Energy and Environmental Aid (press release IP/14/400). They contain criteria under which reductions from renewable surcharges can be granted. The Commission will assess the reductions in Germany in the light of those criteria once the Guidelines are formally adopted.

As to the problem relating to outsourcing of labour in order to artificially reduce the electro-intensity, it seems that this problem is due in Germany to the way electro-intensity is defined in the law. The Commission will investigate this matter.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-003236/14
do Komisji
Adam Gierek (S&D)
(19 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Efektywność energetyczna

Efektywność energetyczną, jak zresztą każdą efektywność w produkcji materialnej, można opisywać umownymi wskaźnikami zużycia globalnego, zużycia *per capita*, zużycia w poszczególnych sektorach gospodarki; można ją także bardziej komplikować i wiązać z innymi jeszcze wskaźnikami, np. *per capita*/km lub *per capita*/tonę.

W dokumentach KE często efektywność jest zastępowana zmniejszeniem zużycia głównie w rezultacie oszczędności, co zresztą było głównym motywem katastrofalnej w swojej wymowie dyrektywy C. Thurmesa. W związku z napływającymi do mnie pytaniami z sektorów przemysłowych, np. stalowniczego, oraz ze strony centralnych planistów w kwestii rozumienia tego pojęcia, a jest to ważne z uwagi na przyszły rozwój, pragnę uzyskać wiążące odpowiedzi potwierdzające lub przeczące na następujące pytania, a mianowicie:

1. czy efektywność sektorowa w branżach energetycznych winna być mierzona współczynnikiem konwersji, np.:

a. energia pierwotna zawarta w węglu jest wykorzystywana efektywnie w 45 lub 50 % w transformacji na energię elektryczną,

b. w produkcji materialnej, np. iloraz zużycia energii na produkcję 1 tony stali lub cementu w stosunku do wyjściowego zużycia, razy 100 w procentach? Oraz

2. czy efektywność energetyczna danego kraju członkowskiego powinna być liczona brutto w odniesieniu do PKB *per capita* dla danego kraju wg Eurostatu, co oznacza, że wskaźnikiem winien być iloraz, w liczniku którego będziemy mieli różnicę konsumpcji energii wyjściowej w danym kraju *per capita* dzieloną przez PKB *per capita* (np. w odniesieniu do 1990 r.) oraz zużycia energii w roku 2020 *per capita* dzieloną przez PKB *per capita* w tymże roku, a to zaś (mianownik) podzielone przez pierwszy składnik tej różnicy, a wszystko to razy 100 w procentach?

Proszę o pilną odpowiedź na moje pytania, gdyż uważam, że KE (stwierdzam to na podstawie dokumentów) nie rozumie, na czym rzeczywiście powinny polegać odmienności pomiędzy tymi niezwykle ważnymi ww. składnikami efektywnościowego celu politycznego 3x20.

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Günthera Oettingera w imieniu Komisji
(15 kwietnia 2014 r.)

1. Ponieważ obecnie brak jest celów dla poszczególnych sektorów, nie ma również wiążących wskazań na szczeblu UE dotyczących sposobu wyrażania i pomiaru takich celów. Zbliżający się przegląd dyrektywy w sprawie efektywności energetycznej będzie obejmował aspekty dotyczące sposobu ujęcia celu w zakresie efektywności energetycznej w perspektywie do roku 2030, z uwzględnieniem ewentualnego celu w zakresie energochłonności dla całej gospodarki lub jej części (w przypadkach gdy zużycie energii jest silnie skorelowane z działalnością gospodarczą).

2. W dyrektywie 2012/27/UE w sprawie efektywności energetycznej efektywność energetyczną zdefiniowano jako stosunek uzyskanych wyników, usług, towarów lub energii do wkładu energii. Cel unijny ujęto jako 20 % zmniejszenie zużycia energii pierwotnej do roku 2020 w porównaniu z prognozami opracowanymi w 2007 r. Cel można zatem zrealizować w drodze zmniejszenia zużycia energii spowodowanego, np. ograniczeniem aktywności. Zgodnie z dyrektywą państwa członkowskie muszą wyznaczyć krajowe cele w zakresie efektywności energetycznej w oparciu o zużycie energii pierwotnej lub końcowej, oszczędność energii pierwotnej lub końcowej bądź energochłonność. Wspomniane cele należy jednak wyrazić również w postaci bezwzględnego poziomu zużycia energii pierwotnej i końcowej w 2020 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003236/14
to the Commission
Adam Gierek (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency, as with any efficiency concerning material production, can be described in terms of agreed indicators of overall consumption, per capita consumption or consumption in the individual sectors of an economy. But it can also be more complicated and involve other indicators, such as km per capita or tonnes per capita.

In Commission documents efficiency often equates to a reduction in consumption, achieved mainly through savings. Indeed, this was the main motivation for what Claude Turmes termed the disastrous directive. In order to be able to answer the questions I am getting from industrial sectors such as the steel industry, and from central planners in terms of understanding this concept, and it is important for future development, I would like binding answers, affirmative or negative, to the following questions:

1. should sectoral efficiency in the energy industries be measured in terms of the conversion factor, e.g.:

(a) the efficiency of converting the primary energy contained in coal into electricity is 45% or 50%;

(b) in material production, for example, the rate of energy consumption to produce one tonne of steel or cement in relation to output consumption, multiplied by 100 to give a percentage? and

2. should the energy efficiency of a given Member State be calculated as a gross figure in terms of the country's per capita GDP according to Eurostat, meaning that the indicator should be a quotient where the numerator is the difference in consumption of output energy in that country per capita divided by the GDP per capita (e.g. in relation to 1990) and energy consumption in 2020 per capita divided by the GDP per capita in the same year, and divided by (denominator) the first component of this difference, multiplied by 100 to give a percentage?

Please reply to my questions as soon as possible because I believe that the Commission (I say this on the basis of documents) does not understand what the differences between these extremely important efficiency components in the 3x20 policy objective should actually be based on.

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

1. As there are at present no sectoral targets there is also no binding indication at EU level as to how such targets should be expressed or measured. The upcoming review under the Energy Efficiency Directive will include considerations on how a possible energy efficiency target within a 2030 timeframe could be formulated, including a possible energy intensity target for the whole economy or a part of it (where energy consumption is strongly correlated with economic activity).

2. The Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU defines energy efficiency as a ratio of output of performance, service, goods or energy, to input of energy. The EU target is formulated in terms of 20% primary energy use reduction by 2020 compared to projections made in 2007. The target can be thus achieved through energy efficiency measures but also through a reduction in energy consumption due for example to lower activity. In line with the directive Member States have to set national energy efficiency targets based on either primary or final energy consumption, primary or final energy savings, or energy intensity. These targets have to be however also expressed in terms of an absolute level of primary and final energy consumption in 2020.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003237/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Manipulación mediática en Venezuela

A lo largo de la última semana, en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, diferentes movimientos fascistas opositores al Gobierno legítimo de Nicolás Maduro desarrollaron una campaña de desestabilización violenta del país que ha dejado tres muertos.

Ante esta intensa campaña de violencia, el Gobierno reaccionó convocando una multitudinaria Marcha por la Paz el pasado día 15 para mostrar a los opositores su apuesta por la negociación no violenta. Frente a esta marcha, estos movimientos fascistas han reaccionado incrementando su violencia en lo que, según diversas fuentes, parece un nuevo golpe de Estado promovido por los sectores derechistas de Caracas.

El problema de la manipulación mediática que se está produciendo a través de medios de comunicación generalistas, así como de redes sociales es abrumadoramente grave. Los grupos de comunicación ofrecen titulares falsos e información tendenciosa sin comprobar las fuentes, mientras que a través de las redes sociales se trasmiten cientos de imágenes cuya falsedad ha quedado demostrada que, a su vez, son compartidas por estos mismos medios, lo que tiene como resultado una estrategia mediática de falsedad y de incitación al odio que no permite ni derecho a réplica por parte del legítimo Gobierno de Venezuela ni el acceso a una información veraz. Pese a las afirmaciones de torturas que se denuncian y se publicitan a nivel internacional a través de estos medios, funcionarios de la Defensoría del Pueblo de Venezuela han constatado que, tras entrevistarse con estudiantes detenidos participantes en los disturbios, ninguno ha denunciado caso alguno de torturas. Sin embargo, esta información no ha aparecido en casi ningún medio de comunicación europeo.

¿Considera que los medios de comunicación más importantes que publican información sobre los disturbios en Venezuela están garantizando el derecho a réplica de las autoridades venezolanas en línea con lo recogido en la Recomendación 2006/952/CE?

¿Puede la Comisión asegurar que las acciones del programa de cooperación audiovisual MEDIA Mundus en Venezuela no están financiando a ningún profesional venezolano que produzca, publicite o difunda alguna de las citadas informaciones falsas?

¿Piensa solicitar que los medios de comunicación de la UE actúen es este caso en concordancia con lo dispuesto en la Resolución del Parlamento Europeo P7_TA(2013)0203 sobre la Carta de la UE: normas para la libertad de los medios de comunicación en la EU?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de mayo de 2014)

La declaración de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta de 25 de marzo de 2014 recuerda que corresponde a las autoridades públicas garantizar que todos los ciudadanos puedan ejercer su derecho a la libertad de expresión, de asociación y de reunión. En una declaración anterior sobre la situación en Venezuela, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta recordó también que es esencial que los periodistas y los organismos de radiodifusión y televisión estén autorizados a ejercer su profesión libremente.

Entre 2011 y 2013, Media Mundus reforzó las relaciones culturales y comerciales entre la industria cinematográfica europea y los cineastas de otros países. En cuanto a los beneficiarios del programa Media Mundus, estos tienen sus propias responsabilidades en materia de producción, publicación y difusión de información. Iría en contra de los principios recordados formular juicios arbitrarios sobre los medios de comunicación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003237/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Media manipulation in Venezuela

Throughout the last week, in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, various fascist movements which oppose the legitimate government of Nicolás Maduro have been carrying out a campaign to violently destabilise the country, which has caused the deaths of three people.

The government has reacted to this campaign of violence by organising a mass March for Peace on 15 March 2015, to show the opposition its preference for nonviolent negotiation. The fascist movements responded to the march by increasing their violence, in what various sources have seen as another attempted coup by rightist sectors in Caracas.

The media manipulation which is taking place, making use of the mass media and social networks, is an extremely serious problem. Media groups are publishing false headlines and contentious information without checking their sources, while hundreds of images which have been shown to be false are being displayed and shared on social media, which is giving rise to a media strategy of falsification and incitement to hatred which neither allows the government to exercise its legitimate right to reply nor permits access to trustworthy information. Although allegations of torture have been made and internationally publicised through such media, officials of the Office of the Venezuelan People's Ombudsman have established, after interviewing students arrested for participation in the riots, that none of them has made any claims of torture. However, this information has been published in virtually no European media.

Does the Commission consider that the prominent media which are publishing information on the disturbances in Venezuela are upholding the Venezuelan authorities' right to reply, as established in Recommendation 2006/952/EC?

Can the Commission guarantee that initiatives carried out under the MEDIA Mundus audiovisual cooperation programme are not funding any Venezuelan professional producing, publicising or disseminating any of the abovementioned false information?

Does it intend to ask EU media to act, in this case, in accordance with the provisions of European Parliament Resolution P7_TA(2013)0203 on the EU Charter: standard settings for media freedom across the EU?

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

The HR/VP's statement of 25 March 2014 recalled that it is incumbent on the public authorities to ensure that all citizens can exercise their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly. In an earlier statement on the situation in Venezuela the HR/VP also recalled that it is essential that journalists and broadcasters are allowed to exercise their profession freely.

Between 2011 and 2013 Mediamundus strengthened cultural and commercial relations between Europe's film industry and filmmakers from other countries. As for beneficiaries of the Mediamundus programme they have their own responsibilities for producing, publishing and disseminating information. It would go against all abovementioned principles to make arbitrary judgments on media reports.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003238/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Violencia fascista en Venezuela

A lo largo de la última semana, en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, diferentes movimientos fascistas opositores al Gobierno legítimo de Nicolás Maduro han desarrollado una campaña de desestabilización violenta del país que ha dejado tres muertos.

Ante esta intensa campaña de violencia, el Gobierno ha respondido convocando una multitudinaria Marcha por la Paz el pasado día 15 para mostrar a los opositores su apuesta por la no violencia. Frente a esta marcha, estos movimientos fascistas han reaccionado incrementando su radicalidad y sus acciones hostiles, en lo que, según diversas fuentes, parece un nuevo intento de golpe de estado promovido desde las altas esferas de los sectores derechistas de Caracas.

La oposición venezolana, que ya incitó a provocar disturbios violentos animados por Capriles tras no reconocer los legítimos resultados de las últimas elecciones del pasado 8 de diciembre, no ha conseguido nunca derrotar por la vía democrática al proyecto bolivariano y ahora vuelve a la vía violenta. En estos disturbios se ha colocado al frente la figura de Leopoldo López, líder opositor que, al parecer, ya había sido condenado en 2008 por un caso de corrupción en PDVSA en 1998, que lo inhabilitaba para ejercer cualquier cargo público. Acusado de instigación a la violencia, se ha entregado a la policía el pasado 19 en un claro movimiento político para continuar su estrategia golpista apareciendo como víctima con la ayuda de John Kerry que no ha tardado en solicitar su liberación pese a haberse entregado él mismo.

¿Conoce los hechos que se están produciendo en Venezuela?

¿Piensa condenar las acciones de la citada oposición fascista que ha provocado ya tres muertos y continua violentando el bienestar del conjunto de los venezolanos?

¿Piensa manifestarse en contra de las declaraciones de John Kerry, que exige la liberación de Leopoldo López, pese a que este se ha entregado voluntariamente?

¿Piensa adherirse a la posición expresada por los principales actores regionales, Unasur y Celac, que condenan los actos violentos y apoyan el papel del Gobierno venezolano como propiciador de la paz?

Respuesta de la alta representante/vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de mayo de 2014)

La alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton está al corriente de los acontecimientos sucedidos en Venezuela. En la declaración dirigida al Parlamento Europeo el 27 de febrero (2014/2600(RSP)), afirmó, entre otros extremos, que

… nos alarma la detención de estudiantes y dirigentes políticos, incluido Leopoldo López, líder del partido socialdemócrata Voluntad Popular. Varias organizaciones acreditadas de la sociedad civil han indicado no tener constancia de ninguna prueba que justifique los cargos imputados. Unimos nuestra voz a la de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para reclamar a las autoridades competentes que las acusaciones que pesan sobre los detenidos sean objeto de una investigación imparcial encaminada a determinar la legitimidad de su detención o disponer su inmediata liberación.

Por lo que respecta a las diligencias actualmente llevadas a cabo por una delegación ministerial de Unasur, la alta representante y vicepresidenta indicó en declaraciones posteriores, el 28 de marzo, que

[…] apoyaba los esfuerzos regionales por sentar a todos los partidos venezolanos en la mesa de negociación y poner fin de forma inmediata a la violencia y los disturbios

[…] acogía con satisfacción la declaración resultante de la misión ministerial de Unasur, que propugna un diálogo integrador entre el Gobierno, todos los partidos políticos y la sociedad civil

[…] se unía al llamamiento de Unasur por moderar el discurso y respetar todos los derechos humanos y apoyaba su decisión de nombrar un observador de buena fe que facilite el diálogo, [y]

[…] confiaba en que el grupo de ministros de exteriores designado por Unasur para hacer avanzar el proceso se asegurará de que el diálogo es verdaderamente exhaustivo y se ajusta a unas modalidades y a un calendario que convengan a todas las partes.

La alta representante y vicepresidenta no desea efectuar comentario alguno sobre las declaraciones realizadas por otros países.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003238/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Fascist violence in Venezuela

Over the past week, various fascist movements in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that oppose the legitimate Government of Nicolás Maduro have been conducting a violent campaign of destabilisation against the country, which has left three people dead.

In light of this intensive campaign of violence, the Government responded by organising a mass March for Peace on the 15th of this month to demonstrate its anti-violence stance to the opposition. These fascist movements have reacted to this march by intensifying their radicalism and hostile actions. According to various sources, this seems to be a fresh attempt at a *coup d'état* provoked by the senior ranks of the right-wing factions in Caracas.

The Venezuelan opposition has been inciting violent disturbances, encouraged by [Henrique] Capriles following his non-recognition of the legitimate results of the last round of elections on 8 December last year. It has never managed to defeat the Bolivarian project by democratic means and is now resorting to violent methods. These disturbances have been fronted by Leopoldo López, the opposition leader who was apparently convicted in 2008 of corruption within the PDVSA — the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company — in 1998, which renders him unfit to hold any public office. Accused of instigating the violence, he handed himself in to the police on the 19th of this month, in a clear political act as part of his continuing attempt to lead a coup but appear as a victim, with the help of John Kerry, who was quick to call for his release, despite [Mr López] having handed himself in to the police.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the events that have occurred in Venezuela?

Does she intend to condemn the actions of the abovementioned fascist opposition that has left three people dead and continues to violate the well-being of every Venezuelan?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to protest against the declarations of John Kerry, who is demanding the release of Leopoldo López, despite the latter having handed himself in of his own accord?

Does she intend to adopt the same position as the main players in the region, Unasur and Celac, which condemn the violent acts and support the role of the Venezuelan Government as a proponent of peace?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the events that occurred in Venezuela. In her statement to the European Parliament on 27 February (2014/2600(RSP)), the HR/VP stated, *inter alia*, that: '[we] are alarmed about the detention of students and political leaders including Leopoldo López, the leader of the social democratic party, Voluntad Popular. Reputable international civil society organisations have indicated that they have not seen any evidence to substantiate these charges. We join the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling upon the relevant authorities to ensure that the accusations brought against those detained are impartially investigated, to decide on the lawfulness of their detention, or to order their release.'

On the current efforts undertaken by a ministerial delegation from Unasur, the HR/VP, in a further statement on 28 March, stated that she:

'[…] supports regional efforts to bring all Venezuelan parties to the table so as to put an immediate stop to violence and unrest

[…] welcomes the statement following this week's Unasur ministerial mission in support of an inclusive dialogue between the government, all political parties and civil society

[…] joins UNASUR's call to moderate the discourse and to respect all human rights and welcomes Unasur's decision to appoint a witness of good faith to facilitate dialogue [and]

[…] trusts the group of foreign ministers appointed by Unasur to pursue the process will work to ensure the dialogue will be truly comprehensive, in a format and with an agenda agreeable to by all parties.'

The HR/VP does not comment on statements made by other countries.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003239/14
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: VP/HR — Filtración de conversación entre Catherine Ashton y Urmas Paet, Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores estonio

El pasado 5 de marzo, la prensa se hizo eco de la filtración de una conversación telefónica entre el Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de la República de Estonia, Urmas Paet, y la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de la Unión Europea, Catherine Ashton, en la que el ministro se mostraba convencido de que las muertes producidas en la Plaza de la Independencia de Kiev habían sido causadas por francotiradores de la oposición y no de la policía ucraniana.

No existían motivaciones políticas que justificaran que el Gobierno de Yanukóvich comenzase a disparar arbitrariamente sobre la oposición para legitimar sus demandas y acabar con el escaso apoyo internacional que aún le podía quedar. Sin embargo, sí en la oposición fascista, que no dudó en disparar y herir a sus propios simpatizantes con tal de provocar el golpe de Estado que finalmente se ha producido bajo el paraguas del apoyo internacional de los Estados Unidos y de la Unión Europea.

El señor Paet ha confirmado la veracidad de la filtración en la que se refería a la información de la que disponía tras una visita a Kiev realizada el pasado 25 de febrero, justo tras los citados sucesos. Dicha confirmación pone en evidencia las intervenciones realizadas en nombre de la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante, que disponía de información que no fue facilitada dos días después al Pleno del Parlamento Europeo cuando se debatió una resolución sobre la situación en dicho país que contó con una intervención realizada en su nombre en la que se apoyaba el golpe de Estado.

¿Reconoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante su participación en la citada conversación telefónica con el señor Urmas Paet? ¿Dispone de más información sobre Ucrania que haya decidido unilateralmente no revelar al resto de las instituciones europeas?

¿Cuáles fueron sus motivaciones para no poner a disposición del Parlamento Europeo la información ofrecida por el señor Paet?

¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que su elección de la información que ofreció al Parlamento Europeo distorsionó y manipuló el resultado final de la resolución aprobada?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de mayo de 2014)

La identidad de los autores debe confirmarse a través de una investigación imparcial y transparente efectuada por las autoridades ucranianas. Los responsables deben ser juzgados. El Grupo Consultivo Internacional del Consejo de Europa, creado el 9 de abril, ofrecerá asesoramiento para que todos los procedimientos se efectúen de conformidad con las normas internacionales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003239/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Leaked conversation between Catherine Ashton and Urmas Paet, Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs

On 5 March last, the press reported a leaked telephone conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, Urmas Paet, and the Vice-President/High Representative of the European Union, Catherine Ashton, in which the minister stated his conviction that the deaths in Independence Square in Kiev had been caused by opposition snipers, not the Ukrainian police.

There were no political motives to justify the Yanukovich government opening fire indiscriminately on the opposition to legitimise its demands and to lose what little international support it might still have had. However, there were such motives for the fascist opposition, which did not hesitate to fire on and wound its own supporters in order to provoke the coup d'état which did eventually take place with the international support of the United States and the European Union.

Mr Paet has confirmed the accuracy of the leak, in which he referred to information in his possession following a visit to Kiev on 25 February last, just after these events occurred. This confirmation puts the spotlight on the interventions made in the name of the Vice-President/ High Representative, who had information in her possession which was not provided two days later to the plenary session of the European Parliament, when a resolution was debated on the situation in Ukraine, which included an intervention made in her name in support of the coup d'état.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative acknowledge having this telephone conversation with Mr Urmas Paet? Does she have in her possession more information on Ukraine which she decided unilaterally not to disclose to the other European institutions?

What were her motives in not making available to the European Parliament the information offered by Mr Paet?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative consider that the selective information which she offered to the European Parliament distorted and manipulated the final outcome of the approved resolution?

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

The identity of the perpetrators must be established by a fair and transparent investigation into the matter, which should be made by the Ukrainian authorities. Those responsible should be brought to justice. The International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe, inaugurated on 9 April, will advise to the effect that all procedures are conducted in line with international standards.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003240/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Denuncia de Abu Dabi a España por la reforma de las renovables

El pasado 11 de febrero, la empresa *Masdar Solar & Wind Coöperatief*, con participación estatal de los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, registraba una denuncia ante el Centro Internacional de Arreglo de Diferencias Relativas a Inversiones (CIADI) contra el Reino de España por la inseguridad jurídica producida por los recortes en las ayudas estatales al sector de las energías renovables.

El Gobierno español retiró las ayudas al sector de las energías renovables el pasado mes de diciembre mediante un decreto que incluso suponía nuevos y graves recortes de las ayudas públicas al sector, a fin de impedir el desarrollo y la implantación de este tipo de tecnología y garantizar así los beneficios de las empresas eléctricas. Este decreto ha desencadenado cinco denuncias al CIADI por la inseguridad jurídica de las inversiones emprendidas en dicho sector, lo que sitúa a España entre los países de todo el mundo objeto mayor número de denuncias ante el CIADI.

La citada empresa denuncia al Gobierno de España por el caso de su inversión en la planta Gemasolar, situada en Fuentes de Andalucía (Sevilla). La central, inaugurada por el Rey junto al jeque Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, supone una experiencia pionera al tratarse de una central termosolar que produce energía durante parte de la noche, en las horas de mayor consumo, resolviendo en parte el tradicional problema de la incapacidad de almacenar la energía solar.

El Ministro de Industria, Energía y Turismo, José Manuel Soria, declaró: «Estas empresas hicieron unas inversiones considerando que iba a haber una rentabilidad razonable superior al 20 % durante toda la vida, y eso no ocurre en ningún país del mundo porque si así ocurriera el resultado sería que el sistema eléctrico simplemente quebraría». Estas declaraciones confirman su intención de proteger los intereses de las compañías de la industria eléctrica convencional, en lugar de apostar por estas nuevas tecnologías desarrolladas en España.

¿Considera la Comisión que el elevado número de denuncias ante el CIADI debido a la citada reforma puede dañar la imagen internacional de la seguridad jurídica en la Unión Europea? ¿Piensa la Comisión instar a España a que revise su reforma para garantizar la seguridad jurídica de las inversiones realizadas en dicho sector? ¿Considera la Comisión que con esta reforma España se ajusta a los objetivos de la estrategia sobre el cambio climático para 2020 y asimismo a la de 2030?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de junio de 2014)

Los Estados miembros tienen la obligación de introducir medidas, incluidas medidas de apoyo, destinadas a garantizar que se cumplan los objetivos nacionales en materia de energías renovables con arreglo a la trayectoria determinada en la Directiva 2009/28/CE ([1]). Si bien los incentivos financieros deben ajustarse en función del desarrollo tecnológico, la Comisión ha señalado repetidamente que es preciso evitar los cambios de carácter retroactivo debido al efecto negativo que tienen sobre la confianza de los inversores en el sector de las energías renovables. La Comisión ha expresado ya su preocupación sobre estos hechos en numerosas ocasiones y se mantendrá vigilante respecto a ellos.

La reforma del sistema español de la electricidad se propone eliminar el amplio déficit tarifario del sector eléctrico y garantizar la estabilidad financiera del sistema, de conformidad con las recomendaciones específicas por países ([2]) y con el programa nacional de reforma de 2013. Esta reforma podría suponer el restablecimiento del equilibrio del sistema; está prevista la colaboración de todas las principales partes interesadas (productores de electricidad y empresas de distribución, consumidores y el Estado). La Comisión entiende que aún no se han adoptado todas las disposiciones jurídicas de la reforma del sector eléctrico, incluido el nuevo régimen de apoyo de los proyectos existentes en materia de energías renovables. Por ello, la Comisión continúa analizando la compatibilidad jurídica de la reforma del sector eléctrico (Ley 24/2013) con la normativa de la UE, incluida la Directiva 2009/28/CE.

De acuerdo con datos de Eurostat, el 14,3 % de energías renovables alcanzado en España en 2012 supera la trayectoria indicativa establecida para dicho año en el anexo I, parte B, de la Directiva.

([1]) Directiva 2009/28/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de abril de 2009, relativa al fomento del uso de energía procedente de fuentes renovables y por la que se modifican y se derogan las Directivas 2001/77/CE y 2003/30/CE.
([2]) Recomendaciones específicas por países de2013 (CSR8).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003240/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Complaint filed by Abu Dhabi against Spain for changes in its renewable energies policy

On 11 February 2014, the company Masdar Solar & Wind Coöperatief, which is partially state-owned by the United Arab Emirates, filed a complaint with the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) against Spain, concerning the legal uncertainty created by recent cuts in state aid to the renewable energies sector.

In December 2013, the Spanish Government withdrew aid to the renewable energies sector by means of a decree which also introduces new and extensive cuts in public aid to the sector, aimed at preventing the development and installation of these types of technology, in order to safeguard the profits of the electricity companies. This decree has prompted five complaints to the ICSID about the lack of legal certainty affecting investments made in this sector, placing Spain among the countries with the most complaints filed against them with the organisation.

Masdar's complaint against Spain centres on the company's investment in the Gemasolar plant in Fuentes de Andalucía (Seville). This pioneering facility, which was inaugurated by King Juan Carlos of Spain and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, is a thermosolar plant which produces energy during part of the night, at peak energy consumption times, thereby partially resolving the traditional problem of inability to store solar energy.

Spain's Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, José Manuel Soria, has observed that 'these companies made investments on the basis of a reasonable life-span profitability of over 20%, and that does not happen in any country in the world, because if it did, it would simply bankrupt the electricity system'. This statement confirms the intention to protect the interests of the conventional electricity companies, rather than supporting these new technologies developed in Spain.

Does the Commission consider that the large number of complaints made to the ICSID against Spain because of this change in the law could damage the international image of legal certainty in the EU? Does the Commission intend to urge Spain to review its reform to ensure the legal certainty of investments made in this sector? Does the Commission consider that by introducing this change, Spain is pursuing the objectives of the 2020 and 2030 climate change strategies?

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

Member States have an obligation to introduce measures, including support schemes, to ensure that they achieve their national renewable energy targets, following the relevant trajectory defined in Directive 2009/28/EC ([1]). While financial incentives should be adjusted following technological development, the Commission has said repeatedly that retroactive changes must be avoided given their negative effect on investor confidence in the renewable energy sector. The Commission has already expressed strong concerns on numerous occasions about these developments and will keep monitoring them.

The reform of the Spanish electricity system aims to eliminate the large electricity tariff deficit and to ensure the financial stability of the system, in line with the country specific recommendations ([2]) and the 2013 Spanish National Reform Programme. The reform has the potential to bring the system into equilibrium and foresees contributions from all the main stakeholders (electricity producers and distribution companies, consumers and the state). The Commission understands that not all legal instruments of the electricity sector reform have yet been adopted, including the new support scheme for existing renewable energy projects. Therefore the Commission is still assessing the legal compatibility of the electricity sector reform (Act 24/2013) with EU legislation, including Directive 2009/28/EC.

According to Eurostat data, the 14.3% share of renewables reached in Spain in 2012 exceeds the indicative trajectory set out foreseen for this that year in Part B of Annex I of the directive.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC.
([2]) 2013 Country specific recommendations (CSR8).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003241/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Declaraciones de Viviane Reding sobre los gitanos europeos

El pasado 13 de febrero, la Comisaria de Justicia, Derechos Fundamentales y Ciudadanía realizaba unas declaraciones en una conferencia del Parlamento Europeo organizada por los eurodiputados Mariya Gabriel y Cristian Dan Preda, que podrían ser consideradas como un intento de criminalización institucional de un grupo de ciudadanos de pleno derecho como es la comunidad gitana del continente.

La Comisaria afirmó: «Déjenme nombrar el problema: el problema es el pueblo gitano, los entre diez y doce millones de ciudadanos europeos que viven en casi cualquier parte, no solo de Bulgaria y Rumanía, la mayoría de ellos en terribles condiciones de pobreza». Este tipo de declaraciones, viniendo de una Comisaria Europea, suponen tal ejemplo de estereotipo que traspasa la ofensa a estos ciudadanos y supone un acto de incitación a la xenofobia desde la Comisión.

La Comisaria ha preferido ignorar el problema de los cientos de miles de jóvenes que migran desde los países del sur de Europa sin ninguna asistencia por parte de sus Estados miembros, al menos en el caso de España. Reding ha señalado a un colectivo en razón de su etnia, apoyando el discurso de las organizaciones de la extrema derecha europea, que criminalizan e incluso llegan a perseguir y atacar al citado colectivo por el mero hecho de su pertenencia étnica.

El pueblo gitano está compuesto por ciudadanos de pleno derecho de la Unión Europea y su legado cultural debe ser motivo de orgullo para el continente donde han decidido residir, al haber sido el único pueblo que nunca en su historia ha declarado la guerra a otro pueblo. Una Comisaria debe actuar en consecuencia y ejercer su cargo con responsabilidad para con todos los ciudadanos de la Unión.

¿Se retracta la Comisaria de sus declaraciones?

¿Considera que sus declaraciones no enmascaran las causas reales de la exclusión de dicho pueblo al atribuirlas a su procedencia étnica?

¿Considera que sus declaraciones podrían justificar y dar fuerza a los discursos xenófobos que se esgrimen en los Estados miembros contra el pueblo gitano? ¿Considera que dichas declaraciones podrían incumplir lo establecido en la Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de mayo de 2014)

Desde que asumió su cargo como primera comisaria de la UE responsable de las carteras de Justicia, Derechos Fundamentales y Ciudadanía, la vicepresidenta y comisaria de Justicia ha seguido muy de cerca todas las cuestiones relativas a los gitanos.

En efecto, ha subrayado en numerosas ocasiones que los gitanos son una parte importante de la población de la Unión Europea cuya correcta integración en las sociedades de los Estados miembros reviste una importancia esencial. De manera valiente y abierta, ha instado a todos los Estados miembros a que respeten las normas comunes de la UE sobre libertad de circulación y no discriminación, así como los valores comunes de la Unión Europea, especialmente el respeto de los derechos fundamentales, incluidos los derechos de los miembros de minorías.

Durante su mandato, se ha emprendido por primera vez un firme proceso de coordinación de las iniciativas de integración de los gitanos con el fin de reducir las desigualdades sociales entre este colectivo y el resto de la población. La comisaria ha dejado claro personalmente que los prejuicios, la intolerancia, la discriminación y la exclusión social que sufren los gitanos son conductas inaceptables en la Unión Europea del siglo XXI y que los gitanos deben disfrutar de los mismos derechos fundamentales y del mismo nivel de igualdad que el resto de los europeos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003241/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Statements by Viviane Reding regarding the European Roma

Speaking on 13 February at a European Parliament conference organised by Members Mariya Gabriel and Cristian Dan Preda, the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship made certain statements that could be interpreted as an attempt to institutionally criminalise a group of full and equal European citizens, namely the continent's Roma community.

The Commissioner said: 'Let me name the problem: the problem are the Roma people, the 10-12 million European citizens who live almost everywhere, not only in Bulgaria and Romania, most of them living in horrid poverty conditions.' Such a statement, coming from a European Commissioner, is precisely the kind of stereotyping that offends these citizens and constitutes an incitement to xenophobia on the part of the Commission.

The Commissioner chose not to mention the problem of the hundreds of thousands of young people who migrate from the southern European countries and who are not afforded any support from their own Member States — at least not in the case of Spain. Mrs Reding has singled out one group of people on the basis of their ethnicity, thereby lending her support to the arguments of European far right organisations who criminalise and even persecute and attack these people on the sole basis of their ethnic origins.

The Roma people are full and equal EU citizens whose cultural legacy should be a great source of pride for the continent where they have chosen to reside, for they are the only people never to have declared war on another. A Commissioner should act accordingly and perform their duties responsibly for all EU citizens.

Will the Commissioner retract her statements?

Does the Commissioner not agree that her statements attributing the Roma people's exclusion to their ethnicity in fact only mask the real causes of this exclusion?

Does she not feel that her statements might justify and add credence to the xenophobic discourse that is being levelled against the Roma people in the Member States? Does she not feel that her statements might be in breach of the provisions of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 May 2014)

Since the Vice-President and Member of the Commission responsible for Justice, took office as the first EU Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship she has been closely following issues involving the Roma.

The Vice-President emphasised on many occasions that the Roma are an important part of the population of the European Union, and that it is of paramount importance that they are well integrated into the societies of Member States. She stood up openly and called on all Member States to respect the commonly agreed EU rules on free movement, non-discrimination and the common values of the European Union, notably the respect for fundamental rights, including the rights of people belonging to minorities.

During her mandate, for the first time ever, a solid process for coordinating action on Roma integration, aiming to reduce social inequalities between Roma and the rest of the population, has been put in place. She made herself clear that prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion Roma have to face is not acceptable in the European Union of 21st century and that Roma should enjoy all fundamental rights and equality in their lives as all Europeans.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003242/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Acoso tributario a emigrantes retornados

Desde mediados del año pasado han comenzado a llegar en Andalucía notificaciones de la Agencia Tributaria a jubilados retornados, exigiéndoles multas y diferentes sanciones por no haber incluido en su declaración de la renta las pensiones percibidas por los sistemas de seguridad social de otros países, que han estado exentas hasta la actualidad.

Estos emigrantes retornados, repartidos por todo el país, están siendo víctimas del acoso tributario, puesto que ya han tributado por las citadas rentas del trabajo en el país donde han estado trabajando y ahora se les quiere someter a una doble imposición de las rentas de dicho trabajo. El Ejecutivo español está aplicando la Ley 35/2006, propuesta y aprobada por el Partido Socialista, que nunca llegó a aplicarse y que ahora está generando sanciones de hasta 30 000 euros a emigrantes españoles.

La Federación Española de Emigrantes Retornados (FEAER) denuncia el afán recaudatorio de la Agencia Tributaria que ha impuesto sanciones sin haber informado nunca de la necesidad de declarar estas pensiones. Dicha federación salió a la calle el pasado 18 de febrero bajo el lema «somos emigrantes, no defraudadores» denunciando su persecución y criminalización fiscal por parte de la Agencia Tributaria. En su respuesta a la pregunta E-009921/2013, la Comisión aseguraba estar estudiando «posibles soluciones a los problemas de doble imposición»; mientras tanto, el Ejecutivo español continúa con el acoso a las pensiones de los emigrantes retornados, que ya afectan a más de 10 000 personas en Andalucía.

Tras el inicio de su investigación, ¿dispone de información suficiente para afirmar si España está actuando de acuerdo con lo dispuesto en la Comunicación de la Comisión «Eliminar las barreras fiscales transfronterizas en beneficio de los ciudadanos de la UE»?

¿Considera que el Gobierno de España está respetando los convenios internacionales existentes en materia de doble imposición de las rentas del trabajo?

¿Piensa recoger en sus recomendaciones a España una invitación a poner fin al acoso fiscal a los emigrantes retornados para que se evite la doble imposición de las citadas rentas?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de mayo de 2014)

La Comisión es muy activa a la hora de plantear el problema de la doble imposición a los Estados miembros y de buscar posibles soluciones.

La finalidad de la Comunicación «Eliminar las barreras fiscales transfronterizas en beneficio de los ciudadanos de la UE» era identificar los ámbitos en los que los Estados miembros podrían hacer más fácil la vida de los trabajadores transfronterizos. No pretendía examinar casos concretos como el mencionado en la pregunta.

A modo de seguimiento, y como se indica en la respuesta a la pregunta escrita 009921/2013, la Comisión presentará un informe sobre las mejores prácticas para hacer frente a los problemas fiscales transfronterizos.

A tal fin, la Comisión creó recientemente un grupo de expertos y puso en marcha una nueva consulta pública en la que espera obtener más información sobre las posibles soluciones a los problemas derivados de la doble imposición.

Los servicios de la Comisión analizarán la información sobre buenas prácticas recogida a través de la consulta pública y el trabajo del grupo de expertos ([1]) y decidirá sobre los próximos pasos, como la recomendación de que los países de la UE apliquen las buenas prácticas que se han identificado, con el fin de eliminar los obstáculos fiscales transfronterizos.

Además, la Comisión está examinando las legislaciones fiscales de los Estados miembros para detectar indicios de medidas discriminatorias en los ámbitos concretos de las pensiones, las personas que ejercen la movilidad y los trabajadores transfronterizos e incoará procedimientos de infracción contra los Estados miembros que incurran en este tipo de discriminación.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-416_es.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003242/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Tax harassment of returning emigrants

Since the middle of last year, retired citizens who returned to Spain after time spent working abroad and who now live in Andalucia have been receiving demands from the Tax Office for the payment of fines and various penalties for having failed to declare income from pensions paid by the social security systems of other countries. Such income has hitherto always been tax exempt.

Such returnees — and this is the case throughout Spain — are the victims of tax harassment: they have already been taxed once on their pensions in the countries where they previously worked, and they now find themselves being taxed again on the same income. The Spanish Government is now applying Law 35/2006, proposed and passed by the Socialists, which could never previously be implemented, but which is now imposing penalties of up to EUR 30 000 on returning Spanish expats.

The Spanish Federation of Returning Emigrants (FEAER) has condemned the zeal with which the Tax Office has been imposing penalties on taxpayers without having given any advance notice of the need to declare pension income. The Federation took to the streets on 18 February to demonstrate against the Tax Office's persecution and criminalisation of returnees, declaring 'we are emigrants, not fraudsters'. In its answer to Question E-009921/2013 the Commission indicated that it was examining 'possible solutions to double taxation problems'; meanwhile, however, the Spanish Government is continuing its relentless pursuit of the pensions of returning emigrants, in actions affecting more than 10 000 people in Andalucia alone.

Have the Commission's investigations to date cast any light on whether or not Spain is acting in accordance with the communication on 'Removing cross-border tax obstacles for EU citizens'?

Does the Commission consider that the Spanish Government is respecting the existing international conventions on the double taxation of earned income?

Will the Commission's recommendations invite Spain to end the tax harassment of returning emigrants and thus prevent the double taxation of such income?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(12 May 2014)

The Commission is very active in bringing the issue of double taxation to the attention of Member States and in identifying possible solutions.

The purpose of the communication on 'Removing cross-border tax obstacles for EU citizens' was to identify areas where Member States could make life easier for cross-border workers. It was not to examine particular cases such as the one mentioned in the question.

As a follow-up and as mentioned in reply to written question 009921/2013, the Commission will present a report on best practices in dealing with cross-border tax issues.

To this end, the Commission recently set up an expert group and launched a new public consultation where it hopes to get further information on possible solutions to double taxation problems.

The Commission services will analyse the information about good practices gathered through the public consultation and the work of the expert group ([1]) and decide on appropriate next steps such as recommending that EU countries apply the good practices that have been identified in order to eliminate cross-border tax obstacles.

In addition, the Commission is examining Member States' tax laws for evidence of discriminatory measures in the specific areas of pensions, mobile persons and cross-border workers and will launch infringement procedures against any Member States practising such discrimination.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-416_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003243/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Nuevo salto de migrantes en la valla de Melilla

El pasado 24 de febrero accedieron, mediante un salto a la valla, unos 100 inmigrantes a la Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla, tras un intenso intento por parte de más de 500 inmigrantes por sobrepasar la citada valla. En el transcurso de los eventos, un vídeo recogió imágenes de los agentes de las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado devolviendo piedras a los migrantes.

Según los datos disponibles, unos 45 migrantes han resultado heridos, las fuerzas de seguridad, tanto españolas como marroquíes han denunciado la creciente agresividad de los inmigrantes. A la luz de los medios e información disponibles, los inmigrantes siguen siendo recibidos con violencia, tanto por parte de las fuerzas marroquíes, que han sido denunciadas por diferentes ONG por su violencia, como de las españolas que han instalado las famosas concertinas y han provocado con su intervención la muerte de 16 inmigrantes recientemente en Ceuta.

En este contexto se desmiente el principal argumento del Gobierno para la instalación de las concertinas, el efecto disuasorio; de hecho, desde su instalación, se han multiplicado los intentos de salto a la valla. Estas concertinas, además del incremento de la violencia en las medidas adoptadas por las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado, están provocando un reguero de muertos y heridos que está manchando la imagen de las fuerzas de seguridad españolas, así como de la sociedad en su conjunto, que permite el asesinato de inmigrantes mientras expulsa a la mayor parte de su juventud. Europa no puede fortificarse hasta el infinito, puesto que la gente desesperada siempre encontrará la forma de superar cualquier barrera; sin un cambio en la política migratoria no se alcanzarán soluciones a los problemas fronterizos de la Unión.

¿Conoce la Comisión los nuevos sucesos de Melilla?

Dentro de la financiación de Frontex para España, ¿ha financiado a las fuerzas de seguridad españolas para cumplir el objetivo de «proporcionar capacidad de respuesta rápida»? ¿Considera que se ha cumplido dicho objetivo, observando el incremento de la violencia de las fuerzas españolas?

A la luz de los últimos escándalos en las fronteras españolas, ¿considera que España está garantizando adecuadamente los derechos fundamentales a la salud y la vida de los inmigrantes irregulares que intentan cruzar la frontera?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de mayo de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-002074/2014 ([1]).

La Comisión se mantiene en contacto con las autoridades españolas en relación con la situación en Ceuta y Melilla, pero no está en condiciones de añadir nuevos datos a su respuesta anterior por el momento.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2014-002074&language=ES

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003243/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: New mass breach of the Melilla border fence by migrants

On 24 February 2014, following a concentrated attempt by over 500 immigrants to breach the security fence around the Autonomous City of Melilla, around 100 immigrants succeeded in climbing the fence and entering the city. During these events, a video camera filmed members of the police and security forces throwing stones back at the migrants.

According to available data, some 45 migrants were wounded, and the Spanish and Moroccan security forces have said that the immigrants are becoming increasingly aggressive. Available information and media reports indicate that immigrants are still being greeted with violence by both the Moroccan security forces — who have been accused of violent behaviour by several NGOs — and their Spanish counterparts, which have erected the notorious razor-wire 'concertina' fences and recently caused the death of 16 immigrants in Ceuta.

This situation gives the lie to the Spanish Government's main argument for erecting the fence — namely that it would have a dissuasive effect — as since its installation, attempts to breach it have in fact multiplied. Apart from the violent measures adopted by national police and security forces, the 'concertinas' are causing a trail of dead and wounded which is damaging the image of the Spanish security forces, and of society in general, which allows immigrants to be killed while at the same time forcing most of its young people to leave the country. Europe cannot increase its defences ad infinitum, as desperate people will always find a way to overcome any barrier; without a change in migration policy it will never be possible to find solutions for the Union's border problems.

Is the Commission aware of the latest events in Melilla?

Has Frontex funding for Spain included assistance to its security forces to enable them to sufficiently improve their rapid response capacity? Can this aim be said to have been achieved, given the increase in violence on the part of Spanish forces?

In light of recent scandalous events on Spanish borders, does the Commission consider that Spain is adequately upholding the fundamental right to health and life of irregular immigrants attempting to cross the border?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-002074/2014 ([1]).

The Commission is in contact with the Spanish authorities regarding the situation in Ceuta and Melilla but is so far not in a position to add to its previous answer.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2014-002074&language=EN

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-003247/14
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de marzo de 2014)

Asunto: Beneficios de las empresas del Ibex 35 en 2013

A lo largo del ejercicio 2013 las empresas más grandes de la economía española, aquellas que conforman el Ibex 35, llegaron a ganar unos 18 872 millones de euros. Estos voluminosos beneficios se produjeron a lo largo de un año en el que la sociedad española sufrió el embate de las políticas de austeridad implementadas por el Gobierno de Mariano Rajoy.

Estos elevados resultados contrastan con la gravísima situación económica que está atravesando el resto del país, donde el desempleo continúa afectando a aproximadamente seis millones de habitantes, donde más de un cuarto del conjunto de la población vive bajo el umbral de la pobreza, donde existen millones de personas absolutamente privadas de ingreso alguno, etc. En este contexto económico-social, las clases trabajadoras del país están pagando la mayor parte de la factura que la especulación financiera ha dejado en las arcas públicas españolas. Siguiendo las recomendaciones de la Unión Europea, el Gobierno ha tratado de reducir el déficit a través de medidas que afectan al grueso de la población. De esta forma el Gobierno de Rajoy ha incrementado el IVA, ha recortado el gasto público en sanidad y educación, ha aplicado la desindexación de las pensiones así como un largo etcéteras de medidas de austeridad que incrementan el impacto de la crisis económica sobre el consumo interno y, por tanto, impulsan la desaparición de las pequeñas y medianas empresas que son las mayores generadores de empleo en España.

¿Conoce la Comisión el voluminoso resultado de las empresas del Ibex 35 durante el ejercicio 2013?

¿Considera la Comisión que las mayores empresas de España deben contribuir a la recuperación económica del país por la vía fiscal, en un momento de emergencia económica como el actual?

¿Piensa introducir la Comisión en las próximas recomendaciones a España el incremento de la actual imposición de los beneficios de las grandes compañías?

¿Considera la Comisión necesario instaurar un impuesto especial sobre dichos beneficios para que las grandes empresas contribuyan a la recuperación económica mientras duren los graves efectos sociales de la crisis económica?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de mayo de 2014)

Al llevar a cabo su control de la evolución económica y presupuestaria de los Estados miembros, la Comisión tiene en cuenta todos los datos pertinentes, incluyendo la evolución de la rentabilidad de las empresas.

Con el fin de incrementar la equidad y la eficiencia del sistema fiscal español y a la vista del escaso coeficiente de los ingresos fiscales con respecto al PIB en España en comparación con la media de la UE, el Consejo, basándose en una recomendación de la Comisión, recomendó en 2013 a España que, entre otras cosas, limitara los gastos fiscales (es decir, exenciones, deducciones, créditos) de la fiscalidad directa, lo que incluye el impuesto de sociedades
(véase http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2013/spain/csr2013_council_spain_en.pdf).

La Comisión llevará a cabo una evaluación del programa de estabilidad para 2014, del programa nacional de reforma y del cumplimiento de las recomendaciones específicas para cada país de 2013 a partir de su presentación en el mes de abril. Sobre la base de la información proporcionada en los programas y la evaluación correspondiente, propondrá al Consejo nuevas recomendaciones para España a principios de junio de 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003247/14
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Profits of the Ibex 35 companies in 2013

Over the course of the 2013 financial year, the biggest companies in the Spanish economy, which form the Ibex 35, managed to earn EUR 18 872 million. These massive profits were made in a year when Spanish society was suffering from the devastating effects of the austerity policies implemented by Mariano Rajoy's government.

This high level of revenue is in stark contrast to the dire economic situation that the rest of the country is facing: approximately six million people are still unemployed; more than a quarter of the entire population is living in the shadow of poverty; millions of people have absolutely no income whatsoever. And these are just a few examples. In this socioeconomic context, Spain's working classes are footing most of the bill left for the country's public funds as a result of financial speculation. In line with the recommendations made by the European Union, the government has tried to reduce the deficit by means of a range of measures that affect the bulk of the population. To this end, Rajoy's government has increased VAT, cut public spending on health and education, de-indexed pensions and implemented a long list of other austerity measures that have increased the impact of the economic crisis on domestic consumption and, as a result, driven small and medium-sized enterprises, the biggest sources of jobs in Spain, out of business.

Is the Commission aware of the massive revenue achieved by the Ibex 35 companies during the 2013 financial year?

Does the Commission think that Spain's biggest businesses should contribute to the country's economic recovery by means of taxes, at a time of economic crisis such as we are experiencing now?

In its next recommendations for Spain, does the Commission intend to introduce an increase in the current level of taxation on the profits of large companies?

Does the Commission think it is necessary to establish a special tax on such profits so that large companies make a contribution to the economic recovery while the serious social effects of the economic crisis are still being felt?

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

In carrying out its surveillance of Member States' economic and budgetary developments, the Commission takes into account all relevant information, including developments of company profitability.

In order to help increase the fairness and efficiency of the Spanish tax system and in view of the low overall tax-to-GDP ratio in Spain, compared to the EU average, in 2013 the Council, on a recommendation of the Commission, recommended to Spain to *inter alia* limit tax expenditure (i.e. exemptions, deductions, credits) in direct taxation, which includes corporate taxation (see: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2013/spain/csr2013_council_spain_en.pdf).

The Commission will make an assessment of Spain's 2014 Stability Programme and National Reform Programme as well as of compliance with the 2013 country-specific recommendations following their submission in April. Based on the information provided in the programmes and the respective assessment it will propose to the Council new recommendations as regards Spain in early June 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003248/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Credibility of EU travel sanctions

Given that travel sanctions against Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe have been lifted to allow him to attend an EU summit in Brussels in April 2014, could the VP/HR explain to me what credibility the travel sanctions imposed on a number of Russians, following their actions in Crimea, will have in the eyes of the international community?

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

The provision in Article 4(3)(a) of Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP ([1]) of 15 February 2011 concerning restrictive measures against officials of the Zimbabwean government states that: restrictions to entry 'shall be without prejudice to the cases where a Member State is bound by an obligation under international law, namely: (a) as a host country of an international intergovernmental organisation;' and therefore travel is justified on grounds of attending intergovernmental meetings. President Mugabe was invited to the EU-Africa Summit and was granted a visa for this purpose as the travel restrictions imposed on him did not apply in this specific case in accordance with Article 4(3) of Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP. However, President Mugabe did not attend the EU-Africa Summit because the travel ban on his wife, Grace Mugabe, was not exempted by the EU. Having no official role in the summit, Grace Mugabe was not granted an entry visa. Both President Mugabe, and Grace Mugabe remain listed in Annex I of Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP.

([1]) Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP of 15.2.2011 concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe, OJ L 42, 16.2.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003249/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Renegotiation of treaties — competent authorities

Could the Commission advise me — in the context of a Member State seeking to renegotiate the Treaties — as to what it would consider as being a competent authority within any such Member State?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(22 April 2014)

It is for each Member State to decide for any specific matter who is its competent authority.

The procedure for amending the Treaties is laid down in Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with Article 48(4) TEU, the amendments to be made to the Treaties are determined by common accord by a conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States. The amendments shall enter into force after being ratified by all the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003250/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Pensioners living in poverty in 2004

Could the Commission advise me of the number of pensioners in the EU living below the poverty line in 2004, broken down by Member State?

Question for written answer E-003251/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Pensioners living in poverty in 2009

Could the Commission advise me of the number of pensioners in the EU living below the poverty line in 2009, broken down by Member State?

Question for written answer E-003296/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Pensioners living in poverty in 2014

Could the Commission disclose the number of pensioners in the EU living below the poverty line in 2014, broken down by Member State?

Joint answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(19 May 2014)

According to the latest data available from Eurostat's EU-SILC survey, the total number of pensioners in the EU28 living below the poverty line was 12.3 million in 2012 (generally referring to the income situation in 2011). According to EU-SILC data this number for the EU-27 was 13.8 million in 2009 (generally referring to the income situation in 2008). As the EU-SILC data collection was implemented progressively in Member States from 2003 onwards, no EU total number is available from EU-SILC for 2004. Finally, the EU-SILC 2014 data will only be available in 2015.

The data broken down by Member State and year is provided in the table attached to this answer.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003252/14
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(19 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Indagine sugli abusi in materia di diritti umani commessi sotto il regime militare in Bolivia

Per protestare contro le impunità relative agli abusi dei diritti umani commessi sotto il regime militare in Bolivia, durato 18 anni, dal 2012 i manifestanti stanno seduti davanti al ministero della Giustizia boliviano. Tra i manifestanti figurano principalmente i sopravvissuti alle torture e i parenti degli «scomparsi» cui è stata negata la giustizia.

Dal 1964 al 1982 la Bolivia era sotto il regime militare e secondo Amnesty International sono almeno 200 le persone giustiziate senza processo e 150 quelle «scomparse». Inoltre almeno 5 000 persone sono state «detenute arbitrariamente» e molti hanno subito torture.

Nel 2004 è stata promulgata una legge per risarcire i superstiti delle violazioni dei diritti umani, la quale tuttavia va riveduta. Secondo Amnesty International «i risarcimenti ricevuti ammontano solo al 20 % dell'importo complessivo previsto con la legge del 2004». Solo 1 714 persone hanno ricevuto un risarcimento minimo su 6 200 domande presentate. L'onere della prova è a carico delle vittime, che devono produrre certificati di morte, prove mediche per le torture e altri documenti e che sono estremamente difficili da ottenere viste le circostanze.

Pur essendo importante un risarcimento equo, la Bolivia deve porre fine alla sua cultura dell'impunità riguardo al travagliato periodo della sua storia. Gli abusi dei diritti umani commessi dal personale militare devono essere processati nei tribunali civili. L'UE è il principale investitore estero in America latina e mentre continuiamo a rafforzare i legami con la regione e i singoli paesi dobbiamo anche mantenere in primo piano le preoccupazioni relative ai diritti umani.

1. Verrà effettuata una dichiarazione con cui si esorta l'Assemblea legislativa boliviana ad approvare l'istituzione di un organo di indagine, in linea con la raccomandazione della commissione per i diritti umani dell'ONU del 2013, per indagare sugli abusi dei diritti umani commessi durante il periodo autoritario?

2. Alla luce del fatto che la Bolivia è il maggiore percettore della cooperazione allo sviluppo bilaterale dell'UE, che tipo di influenza può esercitare l'UE per incoraggiare il governo boliviano a fornire assistenza alle vittime delle violazioni dei diritti umani del regime militare?

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

L'AR/VP condivide le preoccupazioni del Parlamento europeo riguardo alle violazioni dei diritti umani commesse sotto il regime militare, che nella maggior parte dei casi non sono state oggetto né di indagini né di azioni penali. Nel 2009 il governo ha declassificato gli archivi riguardanti il periodo in questione. A quanto ci risulta, tuttavia, finora i militari hanno autorizzato la Procura di Stato a consultare solo una parte limitata degli archivi stessi.

L'Ufficio dell'Alto commissario delle Nazioni Unite per i diritti umani e la Commissione interamericana per i diritti umani hanno chiesto più volte al governo boliviano di rispettare i propri obblighi nei confronti delle vittime e dei loro familiari. I modesti progressi compiuti finora sono dovuti alla presenza di soldati coinvolti nella leadership militare attuale, alla volontà governativa di mantenere buoni rapporti con le forze armate, alla limitata capacità della Procura di indagare su tali crimini e ai problemi incontrati per avviare procedimenti su crimini commessi fino a 50 anni fa.

È tuttavia positivo che a dicembre 2013 il Senato boliviano abbia approvato un disegno di legge che istituisce una «Commissione verità» incaricata di esaminare le violazioni dei diritti umani commesse tra il 1964 e il 1982. Il disegno di legge è attualmente all'esame della Camera e oggetto di consultazioni con le organizzazioni pertinenti della società civile. Ultimamente, inoltre, la magistratura boliviana si è dimostrata capace di gestire alcuni dei casi più recenti di violazioni dei diritti umani.

L'UE collabora attivamente con i soggetti internazionali che operano nel campo dei diritti umani quali il Canada, la Svizzera e le agenzie delle Nazioni Unite e continuerà a sollevare la questione durante le discussioni con il governo boliviano, in particolare in occasione del dialogo annuale ad alto livello.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003252/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Investigation of military-rule human rights abuses in Bolivia

Since 2012, protestors against impunity for human rights abuses committed under Bolivia's 18 years of military rule have been sitting across from the Bolivian Ministry of Justice. These protestors mainly consist of survivors of torture and the relatives of those who 'disappeared'. They have been denied justice.

From 1964 to 1982, Bolivia was under military rule and, according to Amnesty International (AI), at least 200 people were executed without a trial and 150 'disappeared'. Furthermore, at least 5 000 people were 'arbitrarily detained' and many underwent torture.

A law was passed in 2004 to provide for compensation for survivors of human rights violations; however, it needs to be revised. AI reports that 'compensation received is only 20% of the total amount foreseen in the 2004 law'. Only 1 714 people have received minimal compensation, out of the 6 200 applications received. The burden of proof lies with the victims, as they need to provide death certificates, medical proof of torture and other documents that are extremely difficult to obtain under the circumstances.

While fair compensation is important, Bolivia also needs to end its culture of impunity regarding this troubled period in its history. Human rights abuses committed by members of the military must be tried in civilian courts. The EU is the number one foreign investor in Latin America and as we continue to strengthen ties with the region and individual countries, we must also keep human rights concerns at the forefront.

1. Will a statement be made urging the Bolivian Legislative Assembly to approve the creation of an investigative body, this being in line with the UN Human Rights Committee's 2013 recommendation to investigate human rights abuses committed during this authoritarian period?

2. In light of Bolivia being the largest recipient of EU bilateral development cooperation, what influence can the EU exercise in order to encourage the Bolivian Government to provide assistance to victims of human rights violations during the military regime?

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

The HR/VP shares EP concerns about the impunity of human rights violations committed during the period of military rule. The majority of cases have neither been investigated nor prosecuted. In 2009, the government declassified the archives from this period. However, we understand that the military have so far permitted the public prosecutor's office access to only a limited part of the archives.

The UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have repeatedly requested the Bolivian government to comply with its obligations to victims and their families. The so far modest progress is explained by the presence of soldiers involved in today's military leadership, the government's will to maintain good relations with the armed forces, the public prosecutor's limited capacity to investigate such crimes, and difficulties in pursuing cases up to 50 years after the crimes were committed.

On the positive side, in December 2013 the Bolivian Senate passed a draft law creating a Truth Commission to examine human rights violations perpetrated between 1964 and 1982. The draft law is being considered by the lower house of parliament, and consulted with relevant civil society organisations. Lately, the Bolivian judiciary has also shown some capacity to deal with more recent violations.

The EU works closely with international actors active in the area of human rights, including Canada, Switzerland and the UN agencies. It will continue to raise this issue in discussions with the Bolivian Government, in particular during the annual High-Level Dialogue.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003253/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(19 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Επιδείνωση της ανισότητας στην κατανομή του εισοδήματος εντός της ΕΕ

Σύμφωνα με τα επίσημα στοιχεία της ανακοίνωσης της Επιτροπής, της 5ης Μαρτίου 2014, με τίτλο «Απολογισμός της στρατηγικής “Ευρώπη 2020” για μια έξυπνη, διατηρήσιμη και χωρίς αποκλεισμούς ανάπτυξη», πάνω από 26 εκατομμύρια άνθρωποι είναι άνεργοι σήμερα στην ΕΕ, αριθμός που αντιστοιχεί στο 11% περίπου του εργατικού δυναμικού. Επιπλέον, η ανισότητα στην κατανομή του εισοδήματος έχει επιδεινωθεί από την έναρξη της κρίσης στη ζώνη του ευρώ. Το 2012, το εισόδημα του πλουσιότερου 20% του πληθυσμού της Ένωσης ήταν πενταπλάσιο από το αντίστοιχο του φτωχότερου 20%.

Ενόψει των ανωτέρω, παρακαλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα εξής:

1. Πώς μπορεί να καταπολεμήσει η Επιτροπή τις σημαντικές ανισότητες στην κατανομή του εισοδήματος;

2. Συνειδητοποιεί ότι με την ανάθεση τεχνοκρατικής εξουσίας στην Τρόικα γίνεται στόχος κριτικής για τη σοβαρή επιδείνωση της ποιότητας ζωής εκατομμυρίων Ευρωπαίων πολιτών;

3. Ποιες είναι οι προβλέψεις της όσον αφορά την εξέλιξη της ανεργίας στην ΕΕ; Στα επόμενα τρία έως τέσσερα χρόνια, η κατάσταση θα επιδεινωθεί περαιτέρω ή θα αντιμετωπιστεί αποτελεσματικά;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Μαΐου 2014)

Οι με οικονομικά αποδοτικό τρόπο κοινωνικές μεταβιβάσεις και υπηρεσίες, μεταξύ άλλων πολιτικών, διαδραματίζουν σημαντικό ρόλο στη μείωση σε βάθος χρόνου των εισοδηματικών ανισοτήτων. Η Επιτροπή έχει παράσχει καθοδήγηση στα κράτη μέλη μέσω της δέσμης μέτρων για κοινωνικές επενδύσεις ([1]), ενώ με τη συνακόλουθη πρόσκληση που τους απηύθυνε να ακολουθήσουν μια προσέγγιση με βάση τον κύκλο ζωής που να επενδύει στους ανθρώπους και το ανθρώπινο κεφάλαιο, μπορεί να σπάσει ο κύκλος της μεταβίβασης της φτώχειας από τη μια γενιά στην επόμενη, η οποία παγιώνει τις εισοδηματικές ανισότητες.

Η κρίση, βαθιά ριζωμένη σε ανισορροπίες που συσσωρεύτηκαν με την πάροδο του χρόνου, είχε αρνητικές κοινωνικές επιπτώσεις, τις οποίες τα προγράμματα προσαρμογής στόχο έχουν να περιορίσουν. Ο κοινωνικός αντίκτυπος των πολιτικών αποτελεί πάντα σημαντικό θέμα κατά τον πολιτικό σχεδιασμό, όπως αποτυπώνεται στα μνημόνια συνεννόησης (ΜΣ). Είναι ουσιώδες το βάρος της προσαρμογής να κατανέμεται με δίκαιο τρόπο. Εναπόκειται στις εθνικές κυβερνήσεις να χαράξουν πολιτικές για τη διόρθωση των συσσωρευμένων ανισορροπιών σύμφωνα με τους στόχους του προγράμματος.

Η Επιτροπή δίνει ιδιαίτερη βαρύτητα στην τήρηση των αρχών του Χάρτη Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, όπως φαίνεται σαφώς στην επικείμενη έκθεση 2013 της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την εφαρμογή του Χάρτη ([2]). Το λεγόμενο «δίπτυχο» θεσπίζει τους κανόνες διαφάνειας και λογοδοσίας της Επιτροπής ως μέλους της τρόικας.

Η οικονομική ανάκαμψη αναμένεται να έχει θετικό αντίκτυπο στην απασχόληση και τα ποσοστά ανεργίας στην ΕΕ και στη ζώνη του ευρώ ([3]). Ωστόσο, η ανεργία παραμένει σε αρκετές χώρες πάνω από τα προ της κρίσεως επίπεδα. Η εφαρμογή του μεταρρυθμιστικού προγράμματος που καθορίστηκε στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου θα βοηθήσει να διατηρηθούν τα οφέλη της απασχόλησης. Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να προσφέρει την πολιτική της καθοδήγηση και να συμβάλει, μέσω της ολοκλήρωσης, σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, των πρωτοβουλιών που περιλαμβάνονται στη δέσμη μέτρων για την απασχόληση ([4]), καθώς και με την ενίσχυση της κοινωνικής διάστασης της ΟΝΕ ([5]).

([1]) Ανακοίνωση «Στοχεύοντας στις κοινωνικές επενδύσεις για την ανάπτυξη και τη συνοχή — συμπεριλαμβανομένης της εφαρμογής του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου (2014-2020)» (COM(2013)83 τελικό της 20ής Φεβρουαρίου 2013).
([2]) Η έκθεση 2013 για την εφαρμογή του Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της ΕΕ είναι διαθέσιμη στη διεύθυνση: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1399031014350&uri=CELEX:52014DC0224
([3]) Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, Ευρωπαϊκές Οικονομικές Προβλέψεις, χειμώνας του 2014 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee2_en.pdf
([4]) Ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής «Στοχεύοντας σε μια ανάκαμψη με άφθονες θέσεις απασχόλησης» (COM(2012)173 τελικό της 18 Απριλίου 2012).
([5]) Ανακοίνωση με τίτλο «Ενίσχυση της κοινωνικής διάστασης της οικονομικής και νομισματικής ένωσης» (COM(2013)690 provisional της 2 Οκτωβρίου 2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003253/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Worsening inequality in the distribution of income within the EU

According to official data in the Commission communication of 5 March 2014 entitled 'Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', more than 26 million people are currently unemployed in the EU, which amounts to almost 11% of the labour force. Moreover, inequality in the distribution of income has worsened since the onset of the eurozone crisis. In 2012 the richest 20% of the Union's population earned 5 times as much as the poorest 20%.

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

1. How can the Commission combat the severe inequalities in income distribution?

2. Does it realise that by allocating technocratic power to the Troika, it becomes vulnerable to criticism for the severe deterioration in the quality of life of millions of European citizens?

3. How does it envisage the unemployment situation in the EU developing? Will the situation worsen further or will it be combated effectively over the next three to four years?

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

Costs effective social transfers and services, among other policies, play an important role in reducing income inequalities over time. The Commission has provided guidance to the Member States through the Social Investment Package ([1]) and its follow-up inviting them to pursue a life-cycle approach to invest in people and human capital can break the cycle of inter-generational transmission of poverty, which entrenches income inequalities.

The crisis, deeply rooted in imbalances accumulated over time, had negative social consequences which adjustment programmes aim to mitigate. The social impact of policies has always been an important concern in policy design as reflected in the MoUs. It is essential that the adjustment burden is shared in an equitable way. It is for national governments to design policies to correct accumulated imbalances in line with programme targets.

The Commission pays great attention to the respect of the principles set in EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as clearly shown in the forthcoming Commission's 2013 Report on the application of the Charter. ([2]) The so called Two-Pack lays down the rules on transparency and accountability of the Commission as a member of the Troika.

The economic recovery is expected to have a positive impact on employment and unemployment rates in the EU and the euro area. ([3]) Yet, unemployment remains above the pre-crisis levels in several countries. Pursuing the reform agenda set up under the European Semester will help to make employment gains sustainable. The Commission will continue to offer its policy guidance and contribute through finalising EU-level initiatives included in the Employment Package ([4]) as well as with the strengthening of the social dimension of the EMU. ([5])

([1]) Communication, 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion — including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020' (COM(2013) 83 final of 20.2.2013).
([2]) 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1399031014350&uri=CELEX:52014DC0224
([3]) European Commission, 'European Economic Forecast. Winter 2014' http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee2_en.pdf
([4]) Communication 'Towards a job-rich recovery' (COM(2012) 173 final of 18.4.2012).
([5]) Communication 'Strengthening the social dimension of the economic and monetary union' (COM(2013) 690 provisoire of 2.10.2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003254/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(19 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Εκτιμήσεις περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων — μια παρωδία;

Οι πρόσφατες τάσεις όσον αφορά την έρευνα και εξόρυξη μη συμβατικών καυσίμων στην ΕΕ ανέδειξαν την έλλειψη κατάλληλου νομικού πλαισίου σχετικά με τις εκτιμήσεις περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων για τις δραστηριότητες αυτές. Η υφιστάμενη ενωσιακή νομοθεσία περιέχει κενά ως προς τις νέες τάσεις, ιδίως όσον αφορά την υδραυλική ρωγμάτωση. Ωστόσο, ορισμένα κράτη μέλη, όπως το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, η Ρουμανία και η Πολωνία, έχουν απορρίψει το αίτημα του Κοινοβουλίου για επιβολή κριτηρίων και επικαιροποίηση της υφιστάμενης νομοθεσίας με στόχο τον έλεγχο των περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων ή άλλων μορφών επικίνδυνης ρύπανσης.

Η Επιτροπή καλείται συνεπώς να απαντήσει στα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

1. Πώς μπορεί μια σαφής θέση που έχει εγκριθεί από το Κοινοβούλιο να απορρίπτεται λόγω της φιλοδοξίας ορισμένων κρατών μελών, αντί να υιοθετείται μια λύση που θα ικανοποιεί όλα τα κράτη μέλη;

2. Γιατί δεν ενήργησε προληπτικά η ΕΕ επιχειρώντας να θεσπίσει την απαραίτητη νομοθεσία ή να επικαιροποιήσει τους σχετικούς κανονισμούς πριν από την εμφάνιση νέων τάσεων έρευνας και εξόρυξης, όπως η υδραυλική ρωγμάτωση;

3. Τι σκοπεύει να πράξει η Επιτροπή για την προστασία του περιβάλλοντος από παρόμοιες επικίνδυνες δραστηριότητες;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Ιουνίου 2014)

1. Το αποτέλεσμα των διοργανικών διαπραγματεύσεων σχετικά με την αναθεωρημένη οδηγία για την εκτίμηση περιβαλλοντικών επιπτώσεων (ΕΠΕ [1])) ήταν να παραμείνει άθικτο το παράρτημα Ι και να μη συμπεριληφθούν διατάξεις για υποχρεωτική ΕΠΕ στο στάδιο της αναζήτησης σχιστολιθικού αερίου. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο ενέκρινε τη θέση αυτή σε πρώτη ανάγνωση στις 12 Μαρτίου 2014. Ωστόσο, δεν θα πρέπει να παραβλέπεται το γεγονός ότι τα έργα αναζήτησης σχιστολιθικού αερίου πρέπει να εξετάζονται και να λαμβάνονται υπόψη από τα κράτη μέλη στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας ελέγχου που απαιτείται από την οδηγία ΕΠΕ.

2. Η Επιτροπή παρακολούθησε στενά την ανάπτυξη του κλάδου των μη συμβατικών ορυκτών καυσίμων στην ΕΕ και στις 22 Ιανουαρίου 2014 ενέκρινε μια σύσταση με την οποία καλεί τα κράτη μέλη να διασφαλίσουν τη θέσπιση κατάλληλων εγγυήσεων για το περιβάλλον και το κλίμα όσον αφορά την τεχνική υδραυλικής ρωγμάτωσης μεγάλου όγκου που χρησιμοποιείται κατά την εξόρυξη σχιστολιθικού αερίου. Η Επιτροπή θα παρακολουθεί την εφαρμογή της σύστασης και έως τα τέλη Αυγούστου του 2015 θα αξιολογήσει την αποτελεσματικότητα της προσέγγισης που ακολουθείται και θα αποφασίσει αν είναι απαραίτητη η υποβολή νομοθετικών προτάσεων.

3. Η υφιστάμενη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ είναι σχεδιασμένη κατά τέτοιον τρόπο, ώστε να διασφαλίζεται ένα υψηλό επίπεδο προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί την ανάπτυξη των αναδυόμενων δραστηριοτήτων με ενδεχόμενους περιβαλλοντικούς κινδύνους και μπορεί να προτείνει μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση αυτών, εάν χρειαστεί.

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[1] Οδηγία 85/337/ΕΟΚ, ΕΕ L 175 της 5.7.1985.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003254/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Environmental impact assessments — are they a parody?

Recent trends concerning the exploration and extraction of unconventional fuels in the EU revealed the absence of the necessary legal framework regarding the environmental impact assessments for such activities. Current EU legislation contains loopholes concerning the new trends, most commonly with regard to fracking. However, Member States such the United Kingdom, Romania and Poland have rejected Parliament's demand to impose criteria and update the existing legislation in order to control environmental side effects or other hazardous pollution.

The Commission is therefore asked to reply to the following:

1. How can a clear position adopted by Parliament be rejected by the ambition of certain Member States, instead of adopting a solution that will satisfy all Member States?

2. Why did the EU not act in advance and try to enact the necessary legislation or update its relevant regulations prior to the arrival of new exploration and extraction trends, such as fracking?

3. What does the Commission intend to do to protect the environment from similar perilous activities?

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

1. The result of the interinstitutional negotiations on the revised environmental impact assessment (EIA ([1])) Directive was to leave Annex I untouched and not to include provisions for a mandatory EIA for the exploration stage of shale gas. The European Parliament adopted this position in first reading on 12 March 2014. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that shale gas exploration projects have to be considered and taken into account by Member States as part of the screening process required by the EIA Directive.

2. The Commission has closely followed the development of unconventional fossil fuels in the EU and, on 22 January 2014, adopted a recommendation inviting Member States to ensure that proper environmental and climate safeguards would be in place with regard to the high-volume hydraulic fracturing technique used in shale gas operations. The Commission will monitor the application of the recommendation, and by August 2015, it will assess the effectiveness of the approach taken and will decide whether it is necessary to put forward legislative proposals.

3. EU legislation already in place is designed to ensure a high level of protection of the environment. The Commission follows the development of emerging activities with potential environmental risks and can propose measures to address these if necessary.

([1]) Directive 85/337/EEC, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003255/14
an die Kommission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Bericht der Kommission über die Umsetzung der Richtlinie 91/676/EWG zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen

Am 4. Oktober 2013 hat die Kommission einen Bericht an den Rat und das Parlament über die Umsetzung der Richtlinie 91/676/EWG veröffentlicht. Hierbei geht es um die Gewässerverunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen. Für Deutschland wurde hier im Bereich Grundwasser eine Messstationen-Dichte von weniger als einer Messstation je 1 000 km^2 festgestellt, womit man negative Erwähnung am unteren Ende dieser Kategorie findet.

Laut Umweltbundesamt existiert für die regelmäßige Berichterstattung an die Europäische Umweltagentur ein Messnetz von 723 Stationen (2010), die repräsentativen Charakter haben. Für den Bericht der Kommission wurden aber lediglich an ca. 180 Messstationen Werte genommen. Der für Deutschland ermittelte Wert der „Netzdichte" stellt daher keinen repräsentativen Wert für das Vorhandensein von Grundwasser-Messstationen auf dem Bundesgebiet dar.

1. Wurde das Europäische Parlament von der Kommission nicht korrekt über die Messnetz-Dichte in Deutschland informiert?

2. Hält Janez Potočnik, Mitglied der Kommission mit Zuständigkeit für den Umweltschutz, den Messnetzdichte-Wert Deutschlands für repräsentativ?

3. Wie ist die Messdichte (Stationen ja 1 000 km^2) der Grundwassermessstellen der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(5. Mai 2014)

Laut der Nitratrichtlinie ([1]) sorgen die Mitgliedstaaten für die Aufstellung und Durchführung von Überwachungsprogrammen, damit die Wirksamkeit der in dieser Richtlinie vorgesehenen Aktionsprogramme beurteilt werden kann. Fragen wie der Standort, die Dichte oder die Verwaltung der Messnetze sind jedoch den Mitgliedstaaten überlassen. Insofern sind die Mitgliedstaaten dafür verantwortlich, dass mit ihren Messnetzen festgestellt werden kann, welche Gewässer von Verunreinigungen betroffen sind oder bedroht sein könnten.

Die Angaben, die in dem von der Frau Abgeordneten genannten Bericht ([2]) enthalten sind, stützen sich, wie in Artikel 11 der Richtlinie vorgesehen, auf Informationen aus den Mitgliedstaaten gemäß Artikel 10 der Richtlinie. Dem Bericht aus Deutschland lagen Ergebnisse aus einem Messnetz von 162 Grundwasser-Überwachungsmessstationen zugrunde; er enthielt nicht die Daten aus dem Messnetz, die für den Bericht an die Europäische Umweltagentur herangezogen wurden.

Die Kommission hat mit Unterstützung des Nitratausschusses Leitlinien für die in der Nitratrichtlinie vorgesehene Überwachung („Guidelines for the monitoring required under the Nitrates Directive") erarbeitet und beabsichtigt, sich auch weiterhin mit Fragen der Vergleichbarkeit und Repräsentativität der Daten zu befassen, die die Mitgliedstaten im Rahmen des Nitratausschusses übermitteln.

Die Dichte der Grundwasser-Überwachungsnetze der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten ist im *Arbeitspapier der Kommissionsdienststellen* aufgeführt, das den genannten Bericht ergänzt ([3]). In Bezug auf die Dichte der deutschen Messstationen wird ein niedrigerer Wert genannt als bei anderen Mitgliedstaaten.

([1]) Richtlinie 91/676/EWG des Rates zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen.

([2]) Bericht der Kommission an den Rat und das Europäische Parlament zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie 91/676/EWG des Rates zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen auf der Grundlage der Berichte der Mitgliedstaaten für den Zeitraum 2008-2011 (KOM(2013)683 endg.).

([3]) Abbildung 2 in SWD(2013) 405, Teil ¼:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73d84fad-2f28-11e3-8d1c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.04/DOC_1&format=PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003255/14
to the Commission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Commission report on the implementation of the Council Directive of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (91/676/EEC)

On 4 October 2013, the Commission published a report to the Council and Parliament on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. In the case of Germany, the report cites a groundwater monitoring station density of less than one per 1 000 km^2, which puts that country near the bottom of this category.

According to the German Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt), Germany has a network of 723 monitoring stations (2010 figure) that provide representative data for inclusion in regular reports to the European Environment Agency. In the context of the Commission report, however, readings were taken from only some 180 monitoring stations. The 'station density' identified for Germany in that report is not representative, therefore.

1. Was Parliament given inaccurate information by the Commission concerning the monitoring station density in Germany?

2. Does Janez Potočnik, the Commissioner for the Environment, regard the figure given for Germany's monitoring station density as representative?

3. What are the densities (stations per 1 000 km^2) of groundwater monitoring stations in the individual Member States?

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

The Nitrates Directive ([1]) requires Member States to draw up and implement monitoring programmes to assess the effectiveness of the action programmes established pursuant to the directive. However, the directive leaves to the discretion of the Member States issues such as the location, density and management of the monitoring networks. As such, Member States are responsible for ensuring that their monitoring networks enable the identification of waters affected or at risk of being affected by pollution.

The information contained in the report referred to by the Honourable Member ([2]) is based on the information received from Member States pursuant to Article 10 of the directive, as stipulated in Article 11 of the same Directive. Germany's report was based on the results generated by a network of 162 groundwater monitoring stations and did not include the data from the network used to report to the European Environment Agency.

The Commission, assisted by the Nitrates Committee, has developed 'Guidelines for the monitoring required under the Nitrates Directive' and intends to continue addressing the issues of comparability and representativeness of data submitted by Member States in the framework of the Nitrates Committee.

The groundwater monitoring station densities for each Member State are available in the Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the abovementioned report ([3]). The figure given for Germany's monitoring station density is lower than for other Member States.

([1]) Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.
([2]) Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources based on Member State reports for the period 2008-2011 (COM(2013) 683 final).
([3]) Figure 2 in SWD(2013) 405, Part 1/4; http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73d84fad-2f28-11e3-8d1c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.04/DOC_1&format=PDF

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003256/14
an die Kommission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Bericht der Kommission über die Umsetzung der Richtlinie 91/676/EWG zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen

Am 4. Oktober 2013 hat die Kommission einen Bericht an den Rat und das Parlament über die Umsetzung der Richtlinie 91/676/EWG zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen veröffentlicht. In über der Hälfte der Fälle wurde bei Grundwasserproben aus Deutschland eine Nitratkonzentration festgestellt, die über 50mg/Liter betrug. Laut Umweltbundesamt existiert für die regelmäßige Berichterstattung an die Europäische Umweltagentur ein repräsentatives Messnetz von 723 Stationen (2010). Für den Bericht der Kommission wurden aber lediglich an ca. 180 Messstationen Werte genommen. Diese befinden sich zudem in Regionen mit deutlichen Nitratbelastungen. Das Messnetz ist damit nicht repräsentativ für die Nitratbelastung des gesamten Grundwassers in Deutschland. Die im Bericht der Kommission für Deutschland ermittelten Werte zeichnen kein Bild für das gesamte Staatsgebiet. Schaubild A im besagten Bericht enthält den Zusatz, dass die Ergebnisse von allen Grundwasser-Messstationen in unterschiedlichen Tiefen stammen.

1. Wurde das Parlament von der Kommission nicht korrekt über die Belastung des Grundwassers durch Nitrat in Deutschland informiert?

2. Warum wurden für Deutschland statt der repräsentativen Werte der 723 Messstellen für die Europäische Umweltagentur (EUA) nur die ca. 180 hochbelasteten Messstellen verwendet?

3. Hält Janez Potočnik, Mitglieder der Kommission mit Zuständigkeit für den Umweltschutz, die für Deutschland ermittelten Werte für repräsentativ?

4. Welche anderen Mitgliedstaaten außer Deutschland haben ebenfalls nur die Werte von hochbelasteten Gebieten gemeldet und nicht repräsentative Werte für das Gesamtgebiet?

5. Liegen der Kommission Hinweise vor, dass innerhalb der deutschen Bundesländer die Nitratwerte auf die gleiche Weise ermittelt wurden und die Abstände der Messstationen repräsentativ für das Staatsgebiet sind?

6. Wie will die Kommission sicherstellen, dass die Mitgliedstaaten vergleichbare Daten liefern?

7. In welcher Messtiefe und zu welcher Jahreszeit wurden die Nitratwerte an den Messstellen gemessen? Ist dies einheitlich in der gesamten EU der Fall?

8. Ist der Kommission bekannt, dass die Nitratwerte je nach Entnahmetiefe schwanken?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(13. Mai 2014)

Auf einige Fragen der Frau Abgeordneten wurde bereits in der Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-3255/2014 ([1]) eingegangen.

Die in der Nitratrichtlinie ([2]) vorgesehenen Berichtspflichten werden auf der Grundlage der von den Mitgliedstaaten übermittelten Daten erfüllt. Den nationalen Behörden ist freigestellt, wie sie die hierfür notwendigen Messnetze anlegen. Letztere können zwar auf unterschiedlichen Kriterien basieren, haben jedoch alle zum Ziel, die Gewässer zu ermitteln, die von Verunreinigung betroffen sind bzw. werden könnten.

Nach Kenntnis der Kommission hat Deutschland bei den Oberflächengewässern seine Messstationen innerhalb der Messnetze der Bundesländer festgelegt, wobei auf eine repräsentative Auswahl geachtet wurde, die den nationalen Standardkriterien genügt. Was das Grundwasser anbelangt, so hat Deutschland bei der Festlegung seiner Messstationen eine Reihe von Kriterien zugrunde gelegt mit dem Ziel, über ein Messnetz zu verfügen, dass sich insbesondere für die Überwachung der Wirksamkeit der Maßnahmen im Rahmen des bundesweiten Aktionsprogramms eignet. Deutschland hat nicht angegeben, ob die Nitratwerte in allen Bundesländern auf dieselbe Weise bestimmt werden.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Richtlinie 91/676/EWG des Rates zum Schutz der Gewässer vor Verunreinigung durch Nitrat aus landwirtschaftlichen Quellen.

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass die Nitratwerte sich je nach Messtiefe ändern können. Die Messung der Tiefe, ebenso wie die Verfahren der Probenahme, sind innerhalb der EU unterschiedlich. Die Kommission berücksichtigt bei ihren Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung der Nitratrichtlinie alle diese Aspekte ebenso wie die damit zusammenhängenden Fragen der Repräsentativität und Vergleichbarkeit.

Die Kommission hat mit Unterstützung des Nitratausschusses Leitlinien für Messungen im Rahmen der Nitratrichtlinie („Guidelines for the monitoring required under the Nitrates Directive") erarbeitet und beabsichtigt, die Frage der Vergleichbarkeit und der Repräsentativität der von den Mitgliedstaaten vorgelegten Daten auch weiterhin im Nitratausschuss zu behandeln.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003256/14
to the Commission
Britta Reimers (ALDE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Report from the Commission on the implementation of Council Directive of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (91/676/EEC)

On 4 October 2013, the Commission published a report to the Council and Parliament on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. More than half the groundwater samples from Germany were found to have a nitrate concentration in excess of 50 mg/litre. According to the German Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt), Germany has a network of 723 monitoring stations (2010 figures) that provide representative data for inclusion in regular reports to the European Environment Agency. For the purposes of the Commission report, however, readings were taken only from some 180 monitoring stations. What is more, these are located in regions that have clearly been affected by nitrate pollution. The sampling is therefore not representative of the levels of nitrate pollution in all bodies of groundwater in Germany, and the values determined for Germany in the Commission report are not representative of the situation in Germany as a whole. Figure A in the report in question includes a caption stating that the results originate from all groundwater monitoring stations at different depths.

1. Was Parliament given inaccurate information by the Commission concerning the nitrate pollution of groundwater in Germany?

2. Why, in the case of Germany, were only samples from the approximately 180 measuring stations in the most polluted bodies of water used, instead of the representative samples from the 723 measuring stations used in drawing up reports to the European Environment Agency (EEA)?

3. Does Janez Potočnik, the Commissioner for the Environment, regard the values determined for Germany as representative?

4. Which other Member States apart from Germany have also reported only values from the most polluted areas and not representative values for the entire country?

5. Does the Commission have evidence that the nitrate values were determined in the same way in all the German federal states and that the distances between monitoring stations are representative for Germany as a whole?

6. How does the Commission intend to ensure that Member States supply comparable data?

7. At what depths were the nitrate values measured and at what time of year? Are the same sampling methods used consistently across the whole of the EU?

8. Is the Commission aware of the fact that nitrate values vary depending on the depth at which samples are taken?

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

The reply to the Written Question E-3255/2014 [1] already includes responses to some of the queries by the Honorable Member.

The reporting obligations of the Nitrates Directive [2] are fulfilled on the basis of data submitted by Member States. National authorities are left with the choice of how to establish the necessary monitoring networks. While these may be based on different criteria, they have the common aim to identify water affected by pollution and waters which could be affected by pollution.

It is the understanding of the Commission that for surface water, Germany has identified its monitoring stations from among the network in the *Länder*, with a representative selection meeting standard national criteria. For groundwater Germany has identified its monitoring stations based on a number of criteria and with the aim of having a network particularly suitable for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures in the Action Programme in the whole country. Germany has not specified if nitrate values were determined in the same way in all the German federal states.

(1) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
(2) Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.

The Commission is aware that nitrate values vary depending on the monitoring depth. Measuring depths, as well as sampling methods, also vary across the EU. The Commission takes into account all these elements and the related issues of representativeness and comparability in its action on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

The Commission, assisted by the Nitrates Committee, has developed a guiding document 'Guidelines for the monitoring required under the Nitrates Directive' and intends to continue addressing the issue of comparability and representativeness of data submitted by Member States in the context of the Nitrates Committee.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003257/14
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Bienenmangel in Europa

Britischen Studien zufolge droht ein dramatischer Mangel an Honigbienen in Europa, der durch den zunehmenden Anbau von Biotreibstoffen noch verschärft wird. Mit der gestiegenen Anbaufläche für ölhaltige Pflanzen wie Raps, Sonnenblumen und Soja zur Produktion von Biotreibstoffen ist der Bienenbedarf um 38 % gestiegen, während gleichzeitig ein massives Sterben bei den Bienenvölkern zu verzeichnen war. So sollen in Europa sieben Milliarden Bienen fehlen, was dazu führt, dass vor allem in Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien und Italien zu wenige Bienen für eine ausreichende Bestäubung vorhanden sind. In Großbritannien soll es gar vier Mal mehr zu bestäubende Pflanzen als Insekten geben.

In diesem Zusammenhang hat sich ja die Europäische Union eingehend mit dem Einsatz von Pestiziden in der Landwirtschaft bzw. dem Verbot bestimmter Pestizide befasst. Zudem wurden Maßnahmen zur Unterstützung des Bienenzuchtsektors — etwa nationale Dreijahresprogramme zur Förderung der Bienenzucht — gesetzt, die zu 50 % von der EU finanziert werden. Zudem werden ja auch Projekte zur Verbreitung entsprechender Informationen in der Öffentlichkeit sowie Forschungsarbeiten gefördert.

1. In welchem Ausmaß haben die bisherigen Bemühungen nach Einschätzung der Kommission gefruchtet?

2. Bis wann laufen die Förderprogramme zur Bienenzucht noch?

3. Wie viel Geld wurde bis dato dafür aufgewandt?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(15. Mai 2014)

Die Kommission hat 2012 ein externes Beratungsunternehmen damit beauftragt, die Maßnahmen für den Bienenzuchtsektor zu bewerten. Der Bericht [1] kam zu dem Schluss, dass die nationalen Bienenzuchtprogramme in einem Umfeld steigender Erzeugungskosten, der Gefahr für das Überleben der Bienen und eines scharfen internationalen Wettbewerbs durch Honigeinfuhren aus Drittländern zur Stabilisierung der Honigerzeugung in der EU beigetragen haben. Außerdem ist die Gesamtzahl der Bienenstöcke in der Europäischen Union bis 2013 auf 15 704 270 gestiegen.

Mit der jüngsten Reform der gemeinsamen Agrarpolitik wurden die Beihilfen der Union für den Bienenzuchtsektor beibehalten und überarbeitet. Die Mitgliedstaaten können laut Artikel 55 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1308/2013 [2] nationale Dreijahresprogramme für den Bienenzuchtsektor ausarbeiten. In der Verordnung ist kein Zeitpunkt festgelegt, zu dem diese Programme auslaufen müssen.

Von 1998 bis 2013 hat die Union insgesamt 298,2 Mio. EUR für nationale Bienenzuchtprogramme ausgegeben.

Alle drei Jahre legt die Kommission dem Rat und dem Europäischen Parlament einen Bericht über die Durchführung des Programms vor. Jeder Bericht enthält einen Abschnitt, in dem erläutert wird, wie die Mittel von der Europäischen Union und den Mitgliedstaaten ausgegeben wurden. Alle Berichte sind auf der Website der Kommission abrufbar [3].

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/2013/apiculture/fulltext_en.pdf
[2] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/de/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1308&rid=2
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/honey/reports/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003257/14
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Bee shortage in Europe

According to studies conducted in the UK, Europe is at risk of a dramatic shortage of honey bees, which is being exacerbated by the increasing cultivation of biofuels. The enlarged area used to cultivate oil crops such as rape, sunflowers and soya for the production of biofuels has increased bee requirements by 38%, while at the same time we have seen a significant rate of death in bee populations. This means that Europe is said to be short of seven billion bees and as a result, Germany, France, the UK and Italy in particular will have too few bees available to provide sufficient pollination. In the UK, it is reported that the number of crops that require pollination is even four times that of insects.

In this context, the European Union has of course addressed the use of pesticides in agriculture and the ban on certain pesticides in detail. Measures have also been taken to support the beekeeping sector-namely nationwide three-year programmes to promote beekeeping-up to 50% of which is being funded by the EU. In addition, projects to communicate relevant information to the public and research projects have also been supported, of course.

1. In the Commission's view, to what extent have the efforts to date made a difference?

2. How much longer will the beekeeping support programmes continue to run?

3. How much money has been spent on these programmes to date?

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

In 2012, the Commission asked an external consultant to evaluate the measures for the apiculture sector. The report ([1]) concluded that the national apiculture programmes have contributed to the stabilisation of honey production levels in the EU in a context of rising production costs, threats to bee survival and fierce international competition by honey imports from third countries. Furthermore, according to the figures provided by the Member States, the total number of bee hives has increased in the European Union to reach 15 704 270 in 2013.

With the recent reform of the common agricultural policy, the Union aid available for the apiculture sector has been maintained and updated. Article 55 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 ([2]) provides that Member States may draw up national programmes for the apiculture sector covering a period of three years. This regulation does not foresee a date at which these programmes will end.

From 1998 to 2013, the total Union expenditure on national apiculture programmes amounted to EUR 298.2 million.

Every three years, the Commission presents a report to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the programme. Each report contains a section describing how the funds were spent by the European Union and the Member States. All the reports are available on the website of the Commission ([3]):

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/2013/apiculture/fulltext_en.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1308&rid=2
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/honey/reports/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003258/14
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Früherkennung von Bauchaortenaneurysma

Männer sind ca. 9 Mal häufiger von dilatierenden Gefäßerkrankungen betroffen als Frauen. Bauchaortenaneurysma (also die krankhafte Erweiterung der Bauchschlagader) ist bei Männern über 65 eine häufige Todesursache. Chirurgen fordern deshalb Ultraschall-Untersuchungen zur Früherkennung von Bauchaortenaneurysmen (BAA) für alle Männer und Frauen ab dem 65. Lebensjahr sowie für besonders gefährdete Personengruppen wie Raucher.

Internationalen Erfahrungen zufolge sinkt mit einem Screening der Bauchschlagader die Zahl der Todesfälle sowie der Notoperationen um 50 %. Screening auf BAA soll deutlich kostengünstiger sein als etwa das Brustkrebs-Screening oder die Vorsorge für Dickdarm- oder Prostatakrebs. Eine entscheidende Rolle spielen die Schwächung der Aortenwand durch Arteriosklerose und die darauf einwirkende Kraft des Blutdruckes. Mögliche Begleiterkrankungen sind Bronchialerkrankungen, Blutzuckerkrankheit, chronisches Nierenversagen etc.

1. In welchem Ausmaß wird auf EU-Ebene eine Abstimmung vorgenommen, um eine bessere Früherkennung von Krankheiten zu ermöglichen?

2. Wie steht die Kommission zur Forderung nach Untersuchungen zur Früherkennung von Bauchaortenaneurysmen?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(10. Mai 2014)

Die Kommission ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass eine frühzeitige Diagnose bei vielen chronischen Krankheiten eine kostenwirksame Maßnahme darstellt.

Gleichzeitig ist im Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union Folgendes festgelegt: „Bei der Tätigkeit der Union wird die Verantwortung der Mitgliedstaaten für die Festlegung ihrer Gesundheitspolitik sowie für die Organisation des Gesundheitswesens und die medizinische Versorgung gewahrt. Die Verantwortung der Mitgliedstaaten umfasst die Verwaltung des Gesundheitswesens und der medizinischen Versorgung sowie die Zuweisung der dafür bereitgestellten Mittel."

Die Aufgabe der Kommission besteht somit darin, die Maßnahmen der Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, zu ergänzen und zu koordinieren. Vor diesem Hintergrund wird die Kommission eine gemeinsame Maßnahme zu chronischen Krankheiten und zur Förderung der Gesundheit im Alter kofinanzieren, die darauf abzielt, die wirksame Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten im Bereich chronischer Krankheiten, einschließlich der frühzeitigen Diagnose, operativ zu unterstützen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003258/14
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Early detection of abdominal aortic aneurysm

Men are approximately 9 times more frequently affected by dilating vascular diseases than women. Abdominal aortic aneurysm (the pathological dilatation of the abdominal artery) is a frequent cause of death in men over the age of 65. Surgeons are therefore calling for ultrasound tests for the early detection of abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA) for all men and women aged 65 and over and for groups of people who are particularly at risk, such as smokers.

International experience shows that abdominal artery screening causes the number of deaths and emergency operations to fall by 50%. Screening for AAA is supposed to be considerably less expensive than for instance breast cancer screening or the check for colon or prostate cancer. A decisive role is played by the weakening of the aortic wall as a result of arteriosclerosis and the force of the blood pressure which has an effect thereon. Possible concomitant diseases are bronchial diseases, diabetes, chronic kidney failure, etc.

1. To what extent is an agreement being worked on at EU level in order to allow better early detection of diseases?

2. What is the Commission's view on the demand for tests for the early detection of abdominal aortic aneurysms?

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

The Commission is aware of the fact that early diagnosis of many chronic diseases can be a cost effective intervention.

At the same time, the Treaty on the 'Functioning of the European Union' stipulates that 'Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them'.

As such, the role of the Commission is to support, complement and coordinate the actions of the Member States. In this context, the Commission is co-financing a 'Joint action on chronic diseases and promoting healthy ageing across the lifecycle', which aims to create an operational support structure for an effective cooperation among Member States on addressing chronic diseases, including early diagnosis.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003259/14
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Gezeitenkraftwerke

1963 hat Frankreich mit „La Rance“ das erste Gezeitenkraftwerk an der normannischen Küste gebaut. Bei einem Gezeitenkraftwerk wird potentielle und kinetische Energie aus dem Tidenhub des Meeres in elektrischen Strom umgewandelt. Die negativen Umwelteffekte von Gezeitenkraftwerken sollen geringer sein als jene von Hochseewindparks. Zudem liefern sie eine vorhersehbare und potenziell unerschöpfliche Menge an Energie. 2011 wurde in Südkorea am durch Industrieabfälle verseuchten Sihwa-See eine derartige Anlage erbaut, die nun eine stabile Menge an Strom liefert. An der walisischen Kanalküste soll in einer künstlichen Lagune inmitten der Swansea-Bucht eine derartige Anlage gebaut werden. Eine weitere ist zwischen den Orkney-Inseln und dem schottischen Festland geplant. Mitten im New Yorker East River liefert das Kraftwerk „Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy project“ täglich eine kontinuierlich beträchtliche Menge an Strom.

Inwieweit werden im Rahmen der EU-Strategie zur Erhöhung des Anteils an erneuerbarer Energie Gezeitenkraftwerke gefördert?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(22. Mai 2014)

Die genannten Gezeitenkraftwerke beruhen auf einer Technologie, die den Tidenhub nutzt und ausgereift ist. Die Tidenstrom-Technologie ist noch nicht ausgereift, wenngleich in den vergangenen fünf Jahren enorme Fortschritte in Richtung Kommerzialisierung erzielt wurden. Da die Technologie noch in den Kinderschuhen steckt, sind sowohl Investitionen als auch die Forschungsfinanzierung weiterhin wichtig ([1]).

In den vergangenen 20 Jahren hat die EU mit der Meeresenergie zusammenhängende FuE-Projekte finanziert ([2]). 48 Projekte haben insgesamt ca. 78 Mio. EUR aus dem Energieforschungsprogramm erhalten. Zu den finanzierten Projekten gehören drei große ([3]) Gezeitenenergie-Vorhaben sowie eine Reihe horizontaler Forschungsmaßnahmen und koordinierter Maßnahmen, die für die Gezeitenenergie von Bedeutung sind.

Seit 2014 können im Rahmen der Herausforderung „Energie“ von Horizont 2020 ([4]) erneuerbare Energien wie die Meeresenergie finanziell gefördert werden. Außerdem wurden die Herausforderungen im Meeresenergiesektor, der die Gezeitentechnologien einschließt, im Arbeitsprogramm 2014-2015 von Horizont 2020 definiert. Dadurch wird eine sinnvolle zielgerichtete Förderung dieses sich rasch entwickelnden Bereichs sichergestellt.

Darüber hinaus wurde in der Initiative der Kommission zum blauen Wachstum ([5]) festgestellt, dass die Meeresenergie das Potenzial hat, zu Wirtschaftswachstum und Innovation beizutragen ([6]). Als Hilfe bei der Realisierung dieses Potenzials hat die Kommission einen Aktionsplan zur Förderung der weiteren Entwicklung der Meeresenergie in Europa vorgestellt, dem eine Folgenabschätzung zugrunde liegt. Nach der Annahme der Mitteilung zur blauen Energie ([7]) wurde im April 2014 das Meeresenergieforum (Ocean Energy Forum) ins Leben gerufen. Das Forum wird einen strategischen Fahrplan ausarbeiten, in dem Hindernisse aufgezeigt und die Grundzüge einer Strategie für ihre Überwindung dargelegt werden. Den Schwerpunkt sollen vorwiegend neu aufkommende Meeresenergie-Technologien bilden, die innovative Niederdruck-Gezeitenkraftwerkstechnologien und Tidenstrom-Kraftwerkstechnologien umfassen.

([1]) Innovationsförderung sowie die Finanzierung von Forschung und Entwicklung (FuE) sind Voraussetzung für die Entwicklung und Einführung einer rentablen und skalierbaren Technik und Infrastruktur. Sie sind auch für ein besseres Verständnis der ökologischen Auswirkungen und Vorteile sowie für den Marktzugang notwendig.
([2]) Einschließlich Prototypen.
([3]) Kapazität 1-6 MW.
([4]) Aktuelles EU-Rahmenprogramm für Forschung und Innovation.
([5]) Mitteilung der Kommission an das Europäische Parlament, den Rat, den Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss und den Ausschuss der Regionen — Blaues Wachstum — Chancen für nachhaltiges marines und maritimes Wachstum, KOM(2012)494 endg.
([6]) KOM(2012)494 endg.
([7]) KOM(2014)08 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003259/14
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Tidal power stations

In 1963, France constructed the Rance tidal power station, the first of its kind, on the Normandy coast. A tidal power station converts potential and kinetic energy from the sea tides into electric current. The impact of tidal power stations on the environment is said to be less than that of offshore wind farms. In addition, they generate a predictable and potentially inexhaustible amount of energy. In 2011, a similar type of plant was constructed in South Korea on the Sihwa Lake, an area of water polluted by industrial waste, which is now supplying a stable amount of electricity. A similar type of plant is to be constructed in an artificial lagoon in the middle of Swansea Bay on the Bristol Channel in the UK. Another one is planned between the Orkney Islands and the mainland of Scotland. In the middle of New York's East River, the Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy Project supplies a continuously sizeable amount of electricity on a daily basis.

To what extent are tidal power stations being promoted within the scope of the EU's strategy to increase the proportion of renewable energy?

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

The tidal power stations mentioned are based on tidal range technology, which is a mature technology. Tidal current /tidal stream technology is not mature yet, but has made enormous strides in development towards commercialisation in the past five years. Given the infancy of the technology, both investment and research funding remain important. ([1])

During the past two decades the EU has funded ocean energy related R&D projects ([2]). A total of about EUR 78 million have been allocated to 48 projects via the energy research programme. Among the projects that have received funding there are three large scale ([3]) tidal energy projects and a number of horizontal research and coordinated actions of relevance to tidal energy.

As of 2014, the energy challenge of Horizon 2020 ([4]) offers financial support to renewable energy sources such as ocean energy. Moreover, the challenges for the ocean energy sector, which includes tidal technologies, have been defined in Horizon 2020 work programme 2014-2015. It ensures that support for this rapidly developing area can be targeted intelligently.

Furthermore, the Commission's Blue Growth initiative ([5]) has identified ocean energy to have potential for contributing to economic growth and innovation ([6]). To help realise this potential, the Commission presented an action plan to facilitate the further development of ocean energy in Europe, based on an Impact Assessment study. Following the adoption of the Blue Energy Communication ([7]), the 'Ocean Energy Forum' was launched in April 2014. The Forum will deliver a Strategic Roadmap identifying barriers and outlining a strategy for tackling them. It will predominantly focus on emerging ocean energy technologies, which includes innovative low-head tidal barrage and tidal stream.

([1]) Innovation and R&D funding is needed to develop and deploy viable and scalable commercial technology and infrastructure. It is also needed to better understand environmental impacts and benefits and to achieve market entry.
([2]) This includes prototype devices.
([3]) Capacity 1-6MW.
([4]) EU's current framework programme for research and innovation.
([5]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth — COM/2012/0494 final.
([6]) COM(2012) 494 final.
([7]) COM/2014/08 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003260/14
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Käufliche Fachpublikationen

In China sind selbst niedere akademische Positionen ohne Publikation nach dem Science Citation Index (SCI) nicht zu bekommen. Gleichzeitig werden derartige Publikationen auch finanziell belohnt. Was als kleiner chinesischer Übersetzungsdienst für wissenschaftliche Publikationen begonnen hat, ist anscheinend ausgeartet. Medienberichten zufolge soll es in China mittlerweile einen Markt geben, auf dem man Publikationen in den wichtigsten Fachzeitschriften der Erde kaufen kann. Auf die Art sollen Manipulationen am SCI, der zeigt, wer in den wichtigsten wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften publiziert hat und wie oft er zitiert wurde, möglich sein. Nach diesem Index wird der Wert des Journals und der dort publizierenden Forscher bemessen.

Man kann sich nun also eine tatsächlich durchgeführte Forschungsarbeit samt Experimente, Manuskripte etc. kaufen. In der „Erklärung von San Francisco" forderten deshalb im Vorjahr viele Wissenschaftler aus der ganzen Welt, dass dieses Instrument nicht länger über Karrieren entscheidet.

1. Ist der Kommission diese Problematik bekannt?

2. Wie steht die Kommission zur „Erklärung von San Francisco"?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(6. Mai 2014)

1. Bei dem Science Citation Index (SCI) handelt es sich um ein weit verbreitetes Instrument zur Messung des Einflusses wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten. Wie bei jeder anderen Messmethode können Einzelne versuchen, das System zu manipulieren, um ihre persönliche Wirkung größer erscheinen zu lassen. Durch betrügerische Vorgehensweisen wie die von dem Herrn Abgeordneten erwähnten kann der Index manipuliert werden. Der Kommission sind die diesbezüglichen Medienberichte bekannt. Wenn solche Vorgehensweisen existieren, sollten sie den zuständigen Behörden und den betroffenen Verlagen gemeldet werden.

2. Die Kommission begrüßt jede Initiative, die die Diskussion innerhalb der Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft darüber anregt, wie der Einfluss wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten besser gemessen werden kann. Außerdem hat die Kommission im Zuge der Forschungsrahmenprogramme Projekte finanziert, die zum Ziel haben, eine zusätzliche und/oder alternative Methode zur Messung des Einflusses wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten zu entwickeln. Im Rahmen des Programms „Wissenschaft mit der und für die Gesellschaft" von Horizont 2020, dem Rahmenprogramm für Forschung und Innovation (2014-2020), ist für 2015 eine eigene Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen zum Thema der Messung der Auswirkungen wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten vorgesehen ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/science-and-society

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003260/14
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Publication in academic journals for sale

In China, even low-level academic positions are difficult to attain without having had work published according to the Science Citation Index (SCI). At the same time, such publications are also rewarded financially. What began life as a small Chinese translation service for scientific publications has seemingly overstepped its original purpose. According to media reports, a market has since emerged in China on which it is possible to buy publication slots in the world's most prestigious academic journals. In this way, it has been reported that it is possible to manipulate the SCI, an index that shows who has had work published in the most prestigious scientific journals, and how often his or her work has been cited. It is against this index that the value of the journal and the researcher whose work is published in it is measured.

It is therefore now possible to buy research that has actually been carried out, including the experiments, manuscripts and so forth. For this reason, many scientists from across the world signed up to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment last year, in which they called for an end to a situation in which this tool serves as the deciding factor in career progression.

1. Is the Commission aware of this issue?

2. What is the view of the Commission concerning the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 2014)

1. The Science Citation Index (SCI) is a widely used metric to measure the impact of scientific work. Like any other metric, it is possible that individuals may try to game it, in order to increase their apparent impact. Fraudulent activities such as the ones mentioned by the Honourable Member may be used to manipulate the index's score. The Commission is aware of the media reports on this issue. Such activities, if they exist, should be reported to the competent authorities and the publishers in question.

2. The Commission welcomes any initiative that aims at stirring up the debate amongst the Scientific Community on how to better measure scientific impact. Moreover, in the context of Research framework programmes, the Commission has funded projects that have as a goal to develop additional and /or alternative metrics for measuring the impact of scientific work. In the 'Science with and for Society' Programme of Horizon 2020, the framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), a dedicated call is planned in 2015 which addresses the issue of measuring the impact of scientific work ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/science-and-society

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003261/14
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: OECD-Warnung vor zu hartem Sparkurs

Die Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD) warnt, dass kurzfristige Einsparungen an den falschen Stellen Staaten zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt viel Geld kosten können. Regierungen sollten bei ihren Konsolidierungsbemühungen darauf achten, die Sozialausgaben so zu gestalten, dass sie die Folgen der Krise vor allem für die schwächsten Mitglieder der Gesellschaft dämpfen. Der Wirtschaftsaufschwung allein würde nicht ausreichen, um die soziale Spaltung zu überwinden und jenen wieder auf die Füße zu helfen, die es am härtesten getroffen hat. Deshalb müssten die Regierungen wirksamere sozialpolitische Maßnahmen ergreifen, um Vorsorge für künftige Krisen zu treffen. Auch sollten sie keinesfalls Reformen zu verschieben, nur weil der Druck kurzfristig leicht nachlässt.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu den OECD-Forderungen?

2. Inwieweit finden diese Bedenken im Rahmen der Troika-Vorgaben Berücksichtigung?

3. Inwieweit finden diese Bedenken im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters Berücksichtigung?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(28. April 2014)

Die Kommission hat im Jahreswachstumsbericht 2014 [1] betont, dass die Haushaltskonsolidierung mittels einer wachstumsfreundlichen Kombination aus ausgabenseitigen Maßnahmen und Wachstumsmaßnahmen verfolgt und dabei die Qualität der Ausgaben stärker berücksichtigt werden sollte. Bei der Ausgestaltung ihrer Konsolidierungsprogramme sollten die Mitgliedstaaten der Qualität und Zusammensetzung der Programme ebenso wie den Auswirkungen der Haushaltspolitik auf das Wachstum, die Leistungsfähigkeit des öffentlichen Sektors und die soziale Gerechtigkeit Aufmerksamkeit schenken. Die Bekämpfung der Arbeitslosigkeit und die Bewältigung der sozialen Folgen der Krise müssen vorrangige Ziele der Maßnahmen der Mitgliedstaaten bleiben.

Die Programmauflagen im Rahmen der makroökonomischen Anpassungsprogramme sind so zugeschnitten, dass die negativen sozialen Folgen für einkommensschwache Gruppen minimiert werden. Einnahmensteigernde Maßnahmen zielen häufig auf Bevölkerungsgruppen mit höherem Einkommen ab (z. B. besserer Steuervollzugerhebung bei den freien Berufen oder Erhöhung der Mehrwertsteuer und Verbrauchsteuern auf Luxusgüter). Darüber hinaus sehen die Programmauflagen vor, die Auswirkungen von Ausgabenkürzungen auf einkommensschwächere Gruppen (z. B. Bezieher niedriger Renten) zu begrenzen, Sozialleistungen zielgenauer auszurichten und die sozialen Sicherheitsnetze für Arme zu stärken (z. B. im Zuge der jüngsten Maßnahmen in Griechenland).

Zu den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters zählen die aktive Förderung und Ausbildung von Arbeitslosen, die Erleichterung des Übergangs von der Schule ins Berufsleben, die Modernisierung des lebenslangen Lernens und der beruflichen Bildung, die Bildungs- und Arbeitsmarktintegration von gefährdeten Gruppen sowie die Verbesserung der Zugänglichkeit und Wirksamkeit sozialer Transferleistungen und Dienste, auch durch eine bessere Ausrichtung der Leistungen.

Die Mitgliedstaaten sollten die Reformen weiterverfolgen, um den einsetzenden Aufschwung zu unterstützen.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_de.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003261/14
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: OECD warning about excessively hard spending cuts

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is warning that short-term savings in the wrong places may cost countries a lot of money at a later date. With their consolidation efforts, governments should ensure that public spending is organised in such a way as to primarily protect the weakest members of society from the consequences of the crisis. The economic upturn alone would not be enough to overcome the social division and to help the people most deeply affected get back on their feet. The governments would therefore have to take more effective socio-political measures in order to make provision for future crises. They should also under no circumstances put off reforms just because the pressure is easing slightly in the short term.

1. What is the Commission's view on the OECD demands?

2. In what way is account taken of these considerations in the scope of the Troika provisions?

3. In what way is account taken of these considerations in the scope of the European Semester?

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

In the 2014 Annual Growth Survey ([1]), the Commission stressed that fiscal consolidation should be a growth-friendly mix of expenditure and growth measures, putting more emphasis on the quality of expenditure. In designing consolidation programmes Member States should pay attention to their quality and composition as well as to the influence of fiscal policy on growth, public sector efficiency and social equity. Tackling unemployment and social consequences of the crisis must remain a priority in Member States' action.

In macroeconomic adjustment programmes, programme conditionality is tailored as to minimise negative social impact on low income groups. Revenue raising measures are often targeted at higher-income segments of the population (e.g., strengthened enforcement of tax collection for liberal professions, increased VAT and excises on luxury goods, …). Programme conditionality also calls for limiting the impact of expenditure cuts on lower-income segments (e.g., pensioners receiving low pensions), for better targeting social benefits and strengthening social safety nets for the poor (e.g., recent measures for Greece).

Country-specific recommendations in the context of the European semester include active support and training for the unemployed, improving school-to-work transition, modernising life-long learning and vocational training, integrating vulnerable groups in terms of education and employment, enhancing accessibility and effectiveness of social transfers and services, including through better targeting of benefits.

Member States should continue the reforms to support the incipient recovery.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-003262/14
an die Kommission
Kerstin Westphal (S&D)
(19. März 2014)

Betrifft: Mautkontrollen in Österreich grenznah zu Deutschland, Gemeinde Kiefersfelden

Die Entscheidung der österreichischen Autobahngesellschaft ASFINAG ab der deutsch-österreichischen Grenze Mautkontrollen durchzuführen verursacht ab dem 1.12.2013 in der Gemeinde Kiefersfelden wegen Ausweichs-und Umgehungsverkehr ein erhöhtes Verkehrsaufkommen und damit einhergehende Belastungen für die Bewohner der Gemeinde (Lärm-& Luftbeeinträchtigung).

1. Stellt die Beendigung der Vorarlberger Lösung (sog. Korridorvignette) zum 1.12.2013 eine faktische Ausländerdiskriminierung dar?

2. Gebieten solche verkehrspolitische Maßnahmen innerhalb eines Mitgliedstaates europarechtliche Rücksichtsnahmepflichten des Mitgliedstaates wegen der indirekten/direkten Auswirkungen auf andere Mitgliedstaaten?

3. Plant die Kommission Vorhaben zur Harmonisierung verkehrspolitischer Maßnahmen der Mitgliedstaaten im Hinblick auf Lärm-und Luftemissionen?

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

Die EU-Rechtsvorschriften über Straßenbenutzungsgebühren gelten nur für schwere Nutzfahrzeuge über 3,5 Tonnen ([1]). Die Mitgliedstaaten können eigenständig entscheiden, ob sie solche Straßenbenutzungsgebühren auch für Pkw einführen, müssen jedoch den in Artikel 18 AEUV verankerten Grundsatz der Nichtdiskriminierung aus Gründen der Staatsangehörigkeit sowie den Grundsatz der Verhältnismäßigkeit beachten.

1. Österreich führte auf Verlangen der Kommission mit seinem neuen Vignettensystem im Jahr 1997 auch preislich angepasste Kurzzeitvignetten ein. Auf diese Weise wurde sichergestellt, dass das System mit dem Grundsatz der Nichtdiskriminierung und dem Grundsatz der Verhältnismäßigkeit im Einklang steht. Ausländer können, wenn sie den Vorarlberger Korridor nutzen wollen, diese Kurzzeitvignetten kaufen und werden dadurch gegenüber der örtlichen Bevölkerung nicht unverhältnismäßig benachteiligt. Die Beendigung der Vorarlberger Lösung als solche stellt nach Ansicht der Kommission keine Diskriminierung von Ausländern dar.

2. Gemäß den EU-Rechtsvorschriften über die Erhebung von Straßenbenutzungsgebühren müssen der Grundsatz der Nichtdiskriminierung aus Gründen der Staatsangehörigkeit und der Grundsatz der Verhältnismäßigkeit eingehalten werden. In den EU-Rechtsvorschriften sind keine weiteren Pflichten vorgesehen.

3. In der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG sind Vorschriften über die Erhebung von Gebühren für die Benutzung bestimmter Verkehrswege durch schwere Nutzfahrzeuge festgelegt. Mit der Richtlinie 2011/76/EU ([2]) zur Änderung der vorgenannten Richtlinie wurden neue Bestimmungen eingeführt, um solche Fahrzeuge mit den durch Lärm und Luftverschmutzung verursachten Kosten zu belasten.

In ihrem Verkehrsweißbuch aus dem Jahr 2011 ([3]) erklärte die Kommission, sie plane mittelfristig die vollständige und obligatorische Internalisierung externer Kosten (u. a. für Lärm, lokale Umweltverschmutzung und Verkehrsüberlastung zusätzlich zur verbindlichen Deckung von Verschleißkosten) im Straßen- und Schienenverkehr

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([1]) Richtlinie 1999/62/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 17. Juni 1999 über die Erhebung von Gebühren für die Benutzung bestimmter Verkehrswege durch schwere Nutzfahrzeuge (ABl. L 187 vom 20.7.1999, S. 42).
([2]) ABl. L 269 vom 14.10.2011, S. 1.
([3]) Weißbuch „Fahrplan zu einem einheitlichen europäischen Verkehrsraum — Hin zu einem wettbewerbsorientierten und ressourcenschonenden Verkehrssystem" (KOM(2011)144 endg.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003262/14
to the Commission
Kerstin Westphal (S&D)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Toll checks in Austria close to the border with Germany, municipality of Kiefersfelden

Since 1 December 2013, the decision of the Austrian motorway company ASFINAG to carry out toll checks from the German/Austrian border has resulted in traffic taking an alternative route causing an increase in the volume of traffic in the municipality of Kiefersfelden and associated burdens for its residents (noise and air pollution).

1. Does the ending of the Vorarlberg solution (so-called 'Korridorvignette' or corridor windscreen sticker) on 1 December 2013 constitute actual discrimination against foreigners?

2. Do such traffic policy measures within a Member State demand consideration obligations under European law for the Member State due to the indirect/direct consequences on other Member States?

3. Is the Commission planning to harmonise traffic policy measures of the Member States with regard to noise and air pollution?

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

EU legislation on road charging only applies to heavy goods vehicles (> 3.5 tonnes) ([1]). Member States are as such free to introduce road charging schemes for passenger cars while respecting the fundamental principle of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality enshrined in Article 18 TFUE as well as the principle of proportionality.

1. Austria introduced proportionally priced short-term vignettes following the Commission's request when it implemented its vignette scheme in 1997. This ensured that the system was deemed compatible with the non-discrimination and proportionality principles. Foreigners can buy these short-term vignettes whenever they need to use the Vorarlberg corridor and are not disproportionately disadvantaged compared with local residents when doing so. The ending of the Vorarlberg solution does not constitute as such, in the Commission's view, a discrimination against foreigners.

2. EU legislation on road charging requires compliance with the principle of non-discrimination based on nationality and with the principle of proportionality. No additional obligations are provided by EU legislation.

3. Directive 1999/62/EC contains rules on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures. Directive 2011/76/EU, which modifies the latter Directive ([2]), introduced new provisions for the charging of these vehicles for the costs triggered by noise and air pollution.

In its 2011 transport policy White Paper ([3]), the Commission indicated that it would in the medium term proceed to the full and mandatory internalisation of external costs (including noise, local pollution and congestion on top of the mandatory recovery of wear and tear costs) for road and rail transport.

([1]) Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 187, 20.7.1999, p. 42.
([2]) OJ L 269, 14.10.2011, p. 1.
([3]) White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM(2011) 144 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-003263/14
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(19 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Aumento delle importazioni di riso dal Myanmar

L'aumento delle importazioni di riso dai paesi meno sviluppati (PMS) sta turbando il mercato unionale del riso coltivato. I dati attuali evidenziano che il Myanmar, che ha aderito grazie al regime «Everything but Arms» al sistema delle importazioni a dazio zero nell'UE solo dal giugno 2013, ma con effetto retroattivo al giugno 2012, rappresenta un serio pericolo per il mercato del riso dell'UE. Nella scorsa campagna di commercializzazione, le importazioni a dazio zero da questo paese interessavano circa 4 600 tonnellate di riso lavorato; dal settembre 2013 al febbraio 2014 le importazioni hanno invece riguardato 8 800 tonnellate di riso lavorato, di cui 3 760 tonnellate solo nel febbraio 2014. L'Associazione dell'industria del riso del Myanmar (MRIA) ha dichiarato che l'esportazione di riso parboiled, che può contare su una capacità di lavorazione superiore a 1000 tonnellate al giorno, arriverà a 300 000 tonnellate nella campagna commerciale 2014/2015, a fronte delle 30 000 tonnellate registrate nel 2013; già tra dicembre 2013 e febbraio 2014 le importazioni a dazio zero da questo paese di riso parboiled lungo lavorato ammontavano a 600-900 tonnellate al mese, rispetto alle circa 100-150 tonnellate al mese del periodo settembre — novembre 2013. Questa situazione, assieme alle importazioni dalla Cambogia, rischia di compromettere gravemente il mercato del riso prodotto nell'UE, nel quale l'Italia è leader per superficie e produzione. Inoltre, il prezzo del risone rilevato sulla piazza di Vercelli è a un livello stabile, pari a 264 EUR/ton, ma le scorte di risone ammontano, all'11 marzo 2014, a 244 000 tonnellate, cioè 73 000 tonnellate in più rispetto ad un anno fa, e le consegne di riso italiano verso l'UE nei primi 4 mesi della campagna di commercializzazione sono diminuite di 19 000 tonnellate.

Questa crisi colpisce non solo gli operatori del settore, ma anche l'indotto da essi generato e l'industria di trasformazione nazionale; inoltre, l'ultimo aggiornamento fornito dalla Commissione evidenzia un considerevole aumento dei titoli rilasciati per l'importazione di riso lavorato nell'Unione europea; alla luce di quanto sopra e della precedente interrogazione sull'importazione di riso con particolare riferimento alla Cambogia (E-013713/2013, Importazioni di riso dai paesi meno sviluppati),

si interroga la Commissione per sapere quali azioni intende intraprendere e se, vista la tendenza degli ultimi mesi, vi siano le condizioni per procedere all'adozione di misure di salvaguardia quali previste dal regolamento (CE) n. 978/2012.

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(27 maggio 2014)

Conseguentemente al fatto che il Myanmar, grazie al regime «Everything but Arms» — EBA — (Tutto tranne le armi) ha nuovamente avuto accesso al sistema delle importazioni a dazio zero nel giugno 2012 ([1]), le esportazioni di riso lavorato verso l'UE sono passate da 89 tonnellate (t) durante i primi 6 mesi del 2012/13 a 8 854 tonnellate (t) nel corso dello stesso periodo del 2013/14. Tuttavia, considerando che l'UE importa circa 0,8-0,9 milioni di tonnellate di riso all'anno (su base lavorata), il Myanmar non figura tra le principali fonti di provenienza delle importazioni dell'UE. Inoltre, l'aumento delle esportazioni di riso dai paesi parte dell'iniziativa EBA verso l'Unione europea ha soltanto compensato la diminuzione delle quote di mercato di altri paesi terzi, mentre le importazioni totali dell'UE sono rimaste stabili in seguito alla liberalizzazione del regime «Everything but Arms» nel 2009. Oltre a ciò, i prezzi alla produzione del riso «Indica» sono rimasti stabili nell'UE dato che il raccolto del 2013 (circa 260 EUR/t) ha raggiunto un livello che rientra nella normale fascia di prezzo. Vale la pena sottolineare che dal 2013/14 i produttori italiani hanno venduto 286 000 tonnellate di risone «Indica», una quantità inferiore solamente del 5,1 % rispetto alla media degli ultimi 5 anni. Pertanto, considerando anche che la coltura del riso italiano «Indica» ha registrato quasi livelli record (500 000 tonnellate) e raggiunto i mercati molto tardi a causa della raccolta tradiva nel 2013, l'attuale livello di stock non può essere considerato anomalo.

Ai sensi dell'articolo 22 e 23 del regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 ([2]), qualora le preferenze tariffarie siano tali da causare un deterioramento finanziario ai produttori dell'Unione, la Commissione avvia un'inchiesta per determinare se è necessario ristabilire i normali dazi della tariffa doganale comune. Il regolamento delegato (UE) n. 1083/2013 ([3]) della Commissione stabilisce le norme procedurali di tale inchiesta.

Da quanto riportato emerge chiaramente che attualmente queste condizioni non sussistono. La Commissione monitorerà da vicino l'evoluzione degli scambi commerciali del riso a titolo dell'iniziativa EBA e i suoi possibili effetti sui mercati dell'Unione europea e si impegna a fare in modo che sia mantenuto un equilibrio soddisfacente del mercato.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 607/2013 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 12 giugno 2013 (GU L 181 del 29.6.2013).
([2]) Regolamento (CE) n. 978/2012 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 ottobre 2013 (GU L 303 del 31.10.2012).
([3]) GU L 293 del 5.11.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003263/14
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: Increase in rice imports from Myanmar

The increase in rice imports from least developed countries (LDCs) is disrupting the EU market in cultivated rice. Current data show that Myanmar, which, thanks to the 'Everything but Arms' scheme, joined the EU duty-free import scheme only in June 2013 (but with retroactive effect to June 2012), poses a serious threat to the EU rice market. In the last marketing year, zero-duty imports from that country concerned approximately 4600 tonnes of milled rice; from September 2013 to February 2014, however, around 8 800 tonnes of milled rice were imported, of which 3760 tonnes in February 2014 alone. The Myanmar Rice Industry Association (MRIA) has stated that the export of parboiled rice, which can rely on a processing capacity exceeding 1000 tonnes per day, will reach 300 000 tonnes in the marketing year 2014/2015, as compared to the 30 000 tonnes recorded in 2013. Between December 2013 and February 2014, duty-free imports from of parboiled long grain milled rice from Myanmar already amounted to 600-900 tonnes per month, compared to about 100-150 tonnes per month in the period September-November 2013.

This situation, together with imports from Cambodia, is posing a serious risk to the market of EU-grown rice, in which Italy plays a leading role in terms of surface area and production. Meanwhile, the price of paddy rice on the Vercelli market is stable, at EUR 264/tonne, but as at 11 March 2014 there are 244 000 tonnes of paddy stocks, i.e. 73 000 tonnes more than one year ago, and deliveries of Italian rice to EU countries in the first four months of the marketing year decreased by 19 000 tonnes.

This crisis is affecting not only operators in the rice sector but also its satellite industries and the national processing industry. Moreover, the latest update provided by the Commission highlights a significant increase in licences issued for the importation of milled rice into the European Union.

In the light of the above and of a previous question on rice imports, with special reference to Cambodia (E-013713/2013 — Rice imports from least developed countries), can the Commission say what action it intends to take and whether, given the trend of the last few months, the conditions are in place to adopt safeguard measures as provided for by Regulation (EC) No 978/2012?

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

As a result of re-instating Myanmar's access to the EBA tariff preferences as from June 2012 ([1]) their milled rice exports to the EU increased from 89 tonnes (t) during the first 6 months of 2012/13 to 8 854 t during the same period of 2013/14. Nevertheless, considering that the EU imports some 0.8-0.9 million t of rice a year (on milled basis), Myanmar does not figure among the major sources of EU imports. Moreover the increasing EBA rice exports to the EU merely replaced the diminishing shares of other third countries, the total imports of the EU have remained stable since the liberalisation of the EBA regime in 2009. Furthermore producer prices of Indica rice have been stable in the EU since the 2013 harvest at a level (around 260 EUR/t) which is well within their normal price range. It is also worth mentioning that the Italian producers sold 286 000 t of paddy Indica rice in 2013/14 so far, which is only 5.1% less than the average of the last 5 years. Therefore, also considering that the Italian Indica crop was near record level (500 000 t) and reached the markets very late due to delayed harvest in 2013, the present stock level cannot be seen as being out of the ordinary.

Under Article 22 and 23 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 ([2]), if preferences were to cause a serious deterioration of the financial situation of the EU producers, a safeguard investigation could be opened which may end with the reinstatement of the normal tariff duties. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1083/2013 ([3]) sets out the procedural rules of such an investigation.

It is clear from the above that these conditions are currently not met. The Commission will closely monitor the evolution of the EBA rice trade and its possible effects on the EU markets, and remains committed to maintaining a satisfactory market balance.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 607/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 (OJ L 181, 29.6.2013).
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2013 (OJ L 303, 31.10.2012).
([3]) OJ L 293, 5.11.2013.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003264/14
do Komisji
Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(19 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Wielojęzyczność UE – nierówność w dostępie do konsultacji społecznych

Wielojęzyczność jest jedną z głównych cech Unii Europejskiej podkreślającą kulturową i językową różnorodność oraz zapewniającą równe traktowanie obywateli. Wielojęzyczność ma również gwarantować obywatelom prawo do kontaktowania się z instytucjami UE w którymkolwiek z jej urzędowych języków, co umożliwia im korzystanie z prawa do demokratycznej kontroli i czynnego udziału w konsultacjach społecznych.

Z niezrozumieniem obywateli spotyka się więc fakt, iż nadal wiele dokumentów, które mają być poddane konsultacjom społecznym, dostępnych jest tylko w trzech podstawowych językach UE: angielskim, francuskim i niemieckim. Mimo iż w wielu przypadkach formularz odpowiedzi jest dostępny we wszystkich wersjach językowych, nie jest to wystarczające. Zdaniem obywateli dochodzi w ten sposób do dyskryminacji osób nieznających powyższych języków i wykluczenia ich z procesu czynnego udziału w konsultacjach społecznych. W związku z tym chciałam zapytać Komisję, czy:

1. uważa, że poprzez ograniczenie dostępności wszystkich wersji językowych może dochodzić do dyskryminacji obywateli UE nieposługujących się językiem angielskim, francuskim i niemieckim?

2. uważa, że udostępnienie wszystkich wersji językowych dokumentów przeznaczonych do konsultacji społecznych przyczyniłoby się do zwiększenia liczby obywateli biorących w nich aktywny udział?

3. planuje działania na rzecz wprowadzenia wszystkich oficjalnych wersji językowych w procesie konsultacji społecznych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Przewodniczącego Komisji José Manuela Barroso w imieniu Komisji
(22 maja 2014 r.)

Komisja zdecydowanie wspiera stosowanie zasady wielojęzyczności oraz dokłada wszelkich starań, by zapewnić brak dyskryminacji obywateli ze względu na język. Gwarantuje ona pełne poszanowanie przewidzianego w traktatach prawa wszystkich obywateli do komunikowania się z nią w każdym z języków urzędowych UE. Dotyczy to również odpowiedzi w ramach konsultacji społecznych: zainteresowane strony mogą przedkładać swoje uwagi w każdym języku urzędowym UE.

Zasoby dostępne na potrzeby tłumaczeń są jednak ograniczone i niezbędne przede wszystkim do wypełniania zobowiązań prawnych Komisji. W związku z tym nie wszystkie dokumenty poddane konsultacjom społecznym mogą być dostępne we wszystkich językach UE. Niemniej Komisja jest przekonana, że konsultacje odgrywają istotną rolę w kształtowaniu inteligentnej polityki, w związku z czym stara się ona udostępniać tłumaczenia tak wielu dokumentów, jak to możliwe. Na przykład zielone księgi i białe księgi tłumaczy się co do zasady na wszystkie języki, ponieważ uznaje się, że dla celów konsultacji mają one priorytet polityczny. W przypadku innych dokumentów konsultacyjnych służby kierujące Komisji oceniają, jakie wersje językowe są niezbędne w celu dotarcia do opinii publicznej w sposób jak najskuteczniejszy.

Komisja jest w trakcie wdrażania środków określonych w jej przeglądzie z 2012 r. poświęconemu praktykom w zakresie konsultacji społecznych ([1]), które powinny zagwarantować szersze tłumaczenie dokumentów konsultacyjnych w ramach istniejących ograniczeń budżetowych, takich jak skracanie dokumentów konsultacyjnych i kwestionariuszy internetowych w celu ograniczenia niezbędnych zasobów oraz korzystanie z tłumaczenia maszynowego w przypadku pewnych rodzajów dokumentów. Usprawnienie procedur i zapewnienie rozwoju narzędzi planowania również przyczynią się do lepszego uwzględnienia potrzeb tłumaczeniowych w ramach konsultacji społecznych.

([1]) COM(2012) 746 i SWD(2012) 422.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003264/14
to the Commission
Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(19 March 2014)

Subject: The multilinguistic nature of the EU — inequality in access to social consultations

Multilingualism is one of the main features of the European Union, which emphasises its cultural and linguistic diversity and ensures the equal treatment of its citizens. Multilingualism is also intended to guarantee citizens' rights to contact EU institutions in any of its official languages, enabling them to exercise their right of democratic supervision and active participation in social consultations.

Citizens do not understand the fact that many documents that are meant to be subject to social consultations are still only available in the three main languages of the EU: English, French and German. Despite the fact that, in many cases, a reply form is available in all language versions, this is insufficient. In the opinion of citizens this is tantamount to discrimination against those who do not speak the above languages and excludes them from active participation in social consultations.

In respect of the above, I wish to ask the Commission whether:

1. it believes that restricting access to all language versions may constitute discrimination against EU citizens who do not speak English, French and German?

2. it believes that releasing all language versions of documents intended for social consultations would contribute to an increase in the number of citizens taking an active part in them?

3. it is planning any steps to introduce all official language versions during the process of social consultations?

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

The Commission is firmly committed to the principle of multilingualism and does its utmost to ensure that there is no discrimination between citizens on the basis of language. It ensures full respect for the right of all citizens as enshrined in the Treaties, to communicate with it in any of the EU official languages. This also applies to replies to public consultations: stakeholders' contributions can be submitted in any of the EU official languages.

However, resources available for translation are limited and primarily needed to meet the Commission's legal obligations Therefore, not all consultation documents can be made available in all EU languages. Nevertheless, since the Commission strongly believes in the importance of consultations for smarter policy making, it seeks to make available the translations of as many documents as possible. For instance, Green Papers and White Papers are, in principle, translated into all languages, since they are considered a political priority for consultation purposes. For other consultation documents, Commission lead services assess which language versions are needed to reach the public in the most effective way.

The Commission is in the process of implementing measures identified in its 2012 review of public consultation practices ([1]) that should ensure a wider translation of consultations within the existing budgetary limits, such as shortening consultation documents and online questionnaires in order to make translation less resource-intensive and using machine translation for specific documents. Streamlining of procedures and ensuring the development of planning tools should also help to better factor in translation needs for public consultations.

([1]) (COM(2012) 746) and SWD(2012) 422).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-003265/14
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 marzo 2014)

Oggetto: Discarica Spinazzola

La Regione Puglia ha approvato di recente il piano dei rifiuti, il quale prevede la realizzazione di una discarica nel Comune di Spinazzola (in provincia di Barletta-Andria-Trani (BT)).

Il 14 ottobre del 2013, il Consiglio Comunale di Spinazzola ha approvato una delibera che evidenzia le ripercussioni che avrebbe sul territorio la realizzazione di tale discarica e l'impatto sia sull'agricoltura che sull'attività zootecnica.

L'area è zona d'interesse archeologico, storico e culturale, così come sostiene nel piano paesaggistico territoriale regionale la stessa Regione Puglia, la quale ha individuato nella località Grottelline un geosito, con una evidente contraddizione di intenti.

La cava individuata, oltretutto, intercetta una fitta rete di alvei fluviali, i quali creano grandi accumuli idrici all'interno della stessa, dal momento che non sono concluse le opere d'impermeabilizzazione. Ciò provocherebbe un inquinamento delle falde sottostanti, con conseguenti danni ambientali.

Ieri 18 marzo 2014, infine, la Regione Puglia ha concesso al soggetto proponente l'attestazione di compatibilità paesaggistica in deroga per la variante progettuale relativa all'impianto complesso per rifiuti urbani a servizio del bacino di utenza Ba/4, nel territorio del Comune di Spinazzola.

Alla luce di ciò, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene di aprire una procedura di infrazione per violazione della direttiva 2009/147/CE;

2. se, in considerazione dell'importanza del sito neolitico di Grottelline, intende avviare il riconoscimento di sito di interesse comunitario (SIC);

3. se, in considerazione della presenza di numerose specie di uccelli selvatici, intende avviare il riconoscimento di zona di protezione speciale (ZPS)?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(29 aprile 2014)

Sulla base delle informazioni disponibili, la Commissione non ravvisa alcuna potenziale violazione della direttiva Uccelli 2009/147/CE ([1]) che giustifichi un'inchiesta.

L'interesse archeologico di una zona non figura tra i criteri applicabili per la designazione di siti di importanza comunitaria ai sensi della direttiva Habitat 92/43/CEE ([2]). Tali criteri sono definiti nell'allegato III della direttiva e fanno riferimento alla presenza delle specie e dei tipi di habitat elencati nella direttiva stessa ([3]).

Le zone di protezione speciale sono designate direttamente dagli Stati membri sulla base dei criteri scientifici di cui all'articolo 4 della direttiva Uccelli ([4]).

([1]) GU L 20 del 26.1.2010.
([2]) GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/sites_hab/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/sites_birds/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-003265/14
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Spinazzola discharge site

The Apulia regional authorities have recently approved a refuse disposal plan, involving the location of a waste discharge facility in the municipality of Spinazzola in the province of Barletta-Andria-Trani (BT).

On 14 October 2013, the Spinazzola municipal council adopted a resolution concerning the impact of the projected waste discharge site on the surrounding area and in particular on, agriculture and livestock breeding.

Furthermore, as acknowledged by the Apulia regional authority in its landscape development programme, a number of archaeological, historical and cultural sites, including 'Le Grotteline' are located nearby, something which clearly militates against the projected waste discharge site.

In addition, a dense network of watercourses converges on 'Le Grotteline', where large volumes of water accumulate as a result. Given that works to prevent seepage have not yet been completed, there is a risk of groundwater pollution, with adverse effects on the environment.

On 18 March 2014, the Apulia authorities finally, by way of exemption, accorded the prospective contractor an environmental compatibility certificate in respect of the modified projected urban waste refuse disposal site for the Ba/4 catchment area in the municipality of Spinazzola.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission intend to initiate proceedings for the infringement of Directive 2009/147/EC?

2. Given the importance of 'Le Grottelline' as an archaeological site dating back to the Neolithic Age, does it intend to initiate measures to have it recognised as a site of Community importance (SCI)?

3. Given that the area is home to numerous species of wild birds, does it intend to initiate proceedings to have it recognised as a Special Protection Area (SPA)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(29 April 2014)

Based on the information available, the Commission cannot identify any potential breach of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC ([1]) which would warrant an investigation.

The archaeological interest of an area is not included among the criteria to designate Sites of Community Importance under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([2]). Such criteria are set out in Annex III of the directive and refer to the presence of habitat types and species listed by the directive ([3]).

Special Protection Areas are designated directly by Member States on the basis of the scientific criteria mentioned in Article 4 of the Birds Directive ([4]).

([1]) OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.
([2]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/sites_hab/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/sites_birds/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003268/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Επενδύσεις

Δεδομένης της οικονομικής κρίσης και της ύφεσης που παρατηρείται στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, η ανάπτυξη και οι επενδύσεις έχουν μείζονα ρόλο για την ανασυγκρότηση της οικονομίας και τη δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης.

Μπορεί να μας ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή για το πόσες νέες επιχειρήσεις έχουν δημιουργηθεί στην ΕΕ από την αρχή της κρίσης το 2010 και για το αν ο δείκτης είναι αυξητικός ή καθοδικός;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Μαΐου 2014)

Ο κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 295/2008 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου της 11ης Μαρτίου 2008 αναφορικά με τις στατιστικές διάρθρωσης των επιχειρήσεων (αναδιατύπωση) [1] παρέχει μία λεπτομερή ενότητα για τη συλλογή στατιστικών στοιχείων για τη δημογραφία των επιχειρήσεων [2] (ποσοστά γέννησης, θανάτου και επιβίωσης των επιχειρήσεων) χρησιμοποιώντας κοινούς ορισμούς και μεθοδολογία.

Σ’ αυτό το πλαίσιο, η γέννηση μιας επιχείρησης ορίζεται ως μια επιχείρηση που δραστηριοποιείται κατά το εν λόγω έτος και δεν βρισκόταν μεταξύ των ενεργών επιχειρήσεων κατά τα προηγούμενα δύο χρόνια, ενώ θάνατος μιας επιχείρησης ορίζεται ως μία επιχείρηση που διέκοψε τις δραστηριότητές της για τουλάχιστον δύο έτη. Κατά την περίοδο 2009-2011, καταγράφηκε η ίδρυση περισσότερων από 7 εκατομμυρίων επιχειρήσεων στην επιχειρηματική οικονομία της ΕΕ, οι οποίες δημιούργησαν 10,9 εκατομμύρια θέσεις εργασίας. Κατά την ίδια περίοδο, 6,4 εκατομμύρια επιχειρήσεις διαλύθηκαν, προκαλώντας απώλεια σχεδόν 11,5 εκατομμυρίων θέσεων εργασίας.

Επιπλέον, χρησιμοποιώντας μία πιλοτική συλλογή δεδομένων, βασισμένη σε εθνικές απαιτήσεις για την εγγραφή των επιχειρήσεων σε 11 χώρες της ΕΕ, παρατηρήθηκε αύξηση του αριθμού των εγγραφών νομικών μονάδων το 2012, σε σύγκριση με το 2011, στη Βουλγαρία, ενώ παρέμεινε στο ίδιο επίπεδο στις Κάτω Χώρες και στη Γαλλία και μειώθηκε στο Βέλγιο, τη Γερμανία, τη Δανία, την Ισπανία, την Ιταλία, την Αυστρία, την Πορτογαλία και τη Σλοβακία.

Κατά το πρώτο εξάμηνο του 2013, σε σύγκριση με την ίδια περίοδο το 2012, η αύξηση του αριθμού των εγγραφών νομικών μονάδων αναφέρθηκε στην ίδια πιλοτική συλλογή στοιχείων από την Ισπανία, την Αυστρία και την Πορτογαλία· σταθερός παρέμεινε στη Δανία, την Ιταλία και τη Σλοβακία, ενώ μειώθηκε στο Βέλγιο, τη Βουλγαρία, τη Γερμανία, τη Γαλλία και τις Κάτω Χώρες.

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[1] ΕΕ L 97 της 9.4.2008.
[2] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/european_business/special_sbs_topics/business_demography

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003268/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Investments

Given the economic crisis and recession in the European Union, growth and investment have a major role to play in rebuilding the economy and creating jobs.

Can the Commission say how many new enterprises have been created in the EU since the beginning of the crisis in 2010, and whether the trend is upwards or downwards?

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

Regulation (EC) No 295/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008 concerning structural business statistics (recast) ([1]) provides a detailed module for the collection of statistics on business demography ([2]) (enterprise births, deaths and survival rates) using common definitions and methodology.

In this context, an enterprise birth is defined as an enterprise active in the year in question and not present among active enterprises for the preceding two years, and enterprise death as an enterprise that stopped its activity for at least two years. In 2009-2011 more than 7 million enterprise births were reported in the EU business economy, creating 10.9 million jobs. Within the same period 6.4 million enterprises died, causing a loss of almost 11.5 million jobs.

In addition, using a pilot data collection, based on national requirements for registration of businesses in 11 EU countries, an increase in the number of legal unit registrations was observed in 2012, compared to 2011, in Bulgaria, while it remained at the same level in the Netherlands and France and decreased in Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Austria, Portugal and Slovakia.

In the first half of 2013, compared to the same period in 2012, an increase in the number of legal unit registrations was reported in the same pilot data collection by Spain, Austria and Portugal; it remained stable in Denmark, Italy and Slovakia and decreased in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

([1]) OJ L 97, 9.4.2008.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/european_business/special_sbs_topics/business_demography

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003269/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Κόστος της ένταξης της Τουρκίας στην ΕΕ

Στα πλαίσια της ενταξιακής πορείας της Τουρκίας στην ΕΕ, μπορεί να μας ενημερώσει η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή πόσα χρήματα από τα ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια έχουν δοθεί στην Τουρκία από το 2005 στα πλαίσια της προενταξιακής βοήθειας;

Σε περίπτωση προσχώρησης της Τουρκίας στην ΕΕ, ποιο θα είναι το κόστος της εφαρμογής της Κοινής Αγροτικής Πολιτικής στην χώρα αυτή, και ποιο θα είναι το συνακόλουθο κόστος για τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία και το Ταμείο Συνοχής της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Μαΐου 2014)

Όπως όλες οι άλλες υποψήφιες και δυνάμει υποψήφιες χώρες, η Τουρκία λαμβάνει χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια για τη στήριξη των μεταρρυθμίσεων που συνδέονται με την προσχώρηση, με σκοπό την ενίσχυση των δημοκρατικών της θεσμών και την ευθυγράμμιση με τις πολιτικές και τα πρότυπα της ΕΕ.

Κατά την περίοδο 2007-2013, η χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια της ΕΕ προς την Τουρκία στο πλαίσιο του Μηχανισμού Προενταξιακής Βοήθειας (ΜΠΒ) ανήλθε στο ποσό των 4,8 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ περίπου, το οποίο, υπό όρους κατά κεφαλήν βοήθειας (9,26 ευρώ), είναι το χαμηλότερο όλων των δικαιούχων χωρών του ΜΠΒ.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν αναπτύσσει δημοσιονομικό πλαίσιο πέραν αυτού της προενταξιακής βοήθειας. Οι δημοσιονομικές επιπτώσεις πιθανής προσχώρησης της Τουρκίας στην ΕΕ θα αποτελέσουν αντικείμενο διαπραγματεύσεων σε μεταγενέστερο στάδιο της διαδικασίας προσχώρησης. Στο στάδιο αυτό, δεν θα είχε νόημα να γίνει εκτίμηση των δημοσιονομικών επιπτώσεων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003269/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Cost of Turkish accession to the EU

Within the context of the process of Turkish accession to the EU, can the Commission state how much money from EU funds has been allocated to Turkey since 2005 as pre-accession aid?

In the event of Turkey acceding to the EU, what would be the cost of implementing the common agricultural policy in that country, and what would be the resultant cost for the EU's Structural and Cohesion Funds?

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

As all the other candidate and potential candidate countries, Turkey receives financial assistance in support of accession related reforms, to strengthen its democratic institutions and align with EU policies and standards.

In the period 2007-2013, EU financial assistance to Turkey under IPA has been about EUR 4.8 billion, which, in terms of assistance per capita (EUR 9.26), is the lowest of all IPA beneficiary countries.

The European Commission is not developing a budget framework beyond that of the pre-accession assistance. The financial implications of a possible accession of Turkey to the EU will be the subject of negotiations at a later stage of the accession process. An estimate of the financial implications would not be meaningful at this point.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003270/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Διεκδικήσεις της Τρόικα στον γαλακτοκομικό κλάδο

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα, η Τρόικα θέλει να επιβάλει ένα μέτρο για την «απελευθέρωση» της διάρκειας ζωής του «φρέσκου γάλακτος» στην Ελλάδα.

Δεμένου ότι κατ' αυτόν τον τρόπο η Τρόικα υπερβαίνει το ρόλο της, επιβάλλοντας μέτρα που δεν έχουν κάποιο ουσιαστικό οικονομικό όφελος για την ελληνική οικονομία, το εναντίον βάλλουν κατά των συμφερόντων των ντόπιων παραγωγών και δημιουργούν κλίμα ευρωσκεπτικισμού, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ως συμβαλλόμενο μέρος της Τρόικα, είναι ενήμερη για την επιμονή της στο αίτημα αυτό και πού αποβλέπει;

Καθώς τα στοιχεία δείχνουν ότι η εγχώρια παραγωγή αγελαδινού γάλακτος στην Ελλάδα την τελευταία οκταετία συρρικνώνεται, με ποιον ακριβώς τρόπο αυτό το μέτρο θα βοηθήσει την ελληνική οικονομία και τον κλάδο της γαλακτοκομίας, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι μια τέτοια ενέργεια θα ευνοήσει τις εισαγωγές γάλακτος υψηλής διάρκειας ζωής από άλλες χώρες εις βάρος τον ντόπιων παραγωγών;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Μαΐου 2014)

Τον Μάρτιο του 2014, η ελληνική κυβέρνηση άρχισε να εφαρμόζει τις συστάσεις μιας εις βάθος μελέτης στον τομέα του ανταγωνισμού, η οποία εκπονήθηκε σε στενή συνεργασία μεταξύ του Οργανισμού Οικονομικής Συνεργασίας και Ανάπτυξης (ΟΟΣΑ), της ελληνικής Επιτροπής Ανταγωνισμού και της δημόσιας διοίκησης. Αντικείμενο της μελέτης ήταν η νομοθεσία και οι πρακτικές στους τομείς του τουρισμού, του λιανικού εμπορίου, των οικοδομικών υλικών και της επεξεργασίας τροφίμων.

Η Επιτροπή πιστεύει ότι η ορθή εφαρμογή των συστάσεων του ΟΟΣΑ στην Ελλάδα αποτελεί ενισχυτική του ανταγωνισμού διαρθρωτική μεταρρύθμιση, η οποία είναι απαραίτητη για τη βελτίωση του επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος και την αύξηση της ελληνικής ανταγωνιστικότητας. Η επίτευξη των στόχων αυτών είναι ζωτικής σημασίας προκειμένου να τεθεί στέρεη βάση για τη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη και τη δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης στην Ελλάδα.

Η μελέτη αυτή δημοσιεύεται στον δικτυακό τόπο του ΟΟΣΑ:
http://www.oecd.org/daf/competition/greece-competition-review-2013.htm

Όσον αφορά τις συστάσεις σχετικά με το γάλα, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει την κα βουλευτή στη σχετική ενότητα της έκθεσης του ΟΟΣΑ (Κεφάλαιο 1, Τμήμα 2). Πράγματι, ο σχετικός ευρωπαϊκός κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 852/2004 ([1]) απαιτεί από τον υπεύθυνο της επιχείρησης τροφίμων να μεριμνά για την ασφάλεια του προϊόντος και πιο συγκεκριμένα για το γάλα να προσδιορίζει την ημερομηνία ελάχιστης διατηρησιμότητας μέχρι την οποία μπορεί αυτό να καταναλωθεί με ασφάλεια.

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 853/2004 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 29ης Απριλίου 2004, για τον καθορισμό ειδικών κανόνων υγιεινής για τα τρόφιμα ζωικής προέλευσης (ΕΕ L 139 της 30.4.2004, σ. 55).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003270/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Demands by the Troika regarding the dairy sector

It has been reported that the Troika wants to impose a measure 'deregulating' the shelf life of 'fresh milk' in Greece.

Given that the Troika is exceeding its authority in this matter by seeking to impose measures that will have no significant economic benefit for the Greek economy, but rather act against the interests of domestic producers and create a climate of euro-scepticism, will the Commission say:

As a part of the Troika, is it aware that the Troika is obstinately pursuing this demand and what is its purpose in so doing?

Since the data show that domestic production of cow's milk in Greece has shrunk over the last eight years, how exactly will this measure help the Greek economy and the dairy sector, bearing in mind that such an action will encourage imports of long-life milk from other countries at the expense of domestic producers?

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

In March 2014, the Greek Government has begun to implement the recommendations of an in-depth competition study, developed in close partnership between the OECD, the Hellenic Competition Commission, and the public administration. They deal with legislation and practices in the sectors of tourism, retail trade, construction materials and food processing.

The Commission believes that adequate implementation of the OECD recommendations in Greece is a crucial competition-enhancing structural reform which is essential to improve the business environment and raise Greek competitiveness. Achieving these objectives is of crucial importance to set a solid basis for sustainable growth and employment creation in Greece.

This study is published on the OECD website: http://www.oecd.org/daf/competition/greece-competition-review-2013.htm

With regard to the recommendations on milk, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the relevant section of the OECD report (Chapter 1, Section 2). Indeed the relevant European Regulation (EC) 852/2004 ([1]) requires the food business operator to provide for the safety of the product and more specifically for milk to specify the date of minimum durability up to which it can be consumed safely.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-003271/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 Μαρτίου 2014)

Θέμα: Προενταξιακή βοήθεια στην Τουρκία

Η ΕΕ, στα πλαίσια της προενταξιακής βοήθειας στην Τουρκία, έχει χρηματοδοτήσει την Τουρκία με περισσότερα από 4,5 δισ.

Έχει ελέγξει η Επιτροπή τον τρόπο με τον οποίο δαπανώνται αυτά τα χρήματα στην Τουρκία, εις τρόπον ώστε να προωθούνται οι ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και αξίες; Πώς διασφαλίζεται η αρχή του «more for more»;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Μαΐου 2014)

Την περίοδο 2007-2013, η χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια της ΕΕ στην Τουρκία ανήλθε σε 4,8 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ περίπου. Πρόκειται για ένα σχετικά μικρό ποσό προενταξιακής βοήθειας (περίπου 9,26 ευρώ κατά κεφαλή/έτος), σε σύγκριση με άλλους δικαιούχους του του Μηχανισμού Προενταξιακής Βοήθειας (ΜΠΒ).

Κύριος στόχος του ΜΠΒ είναι να διευκολύνει τις υποψήφιες χώρες να αντιμετωπίσουν τις προκλήσεις της ευρωπαϊκής ολοκλήρωσης και να υλοποιήσουν τις μεταρρυθμίσεις που απαιτούνται για την εκπλήρωση των κριτηρίων της Κοπεγχάγης όσον αφορά την προσχώρηση στην ΕΕ. Τα βασικά έγγραφα άσκησης πολιτικής που καθορίζουν τις προτεραιότητες για τον προγραμματισμό της βοήθειας προς την Τουρκία στο πλαίσιο του ΜΠΒ είναι η εταιρική σχέση για την προσχώρηση, το ετήσιο έγγραφο στρατηγικής για τη διεύρυνση και οι εκθέσεις προόδου στην πορεία προς την ΕΕ. Το έγγραφο πολυετούς ενδεικτικού σχεδιασμού απετέλεσε το στρατηγικό έγγραφο για το ΜΠΒ για την περίοδο 2007-2013.

Η διαχείριση των προγραμμάτων που χρηματοδοτούνται από το ΜΠΒ στην Τουρκία είναι έμμεση. Επομένως, η προκήρυξη υποβολής προτάσεων/προσφορών και η σύναψη συμβάσεων τελούν υπό την ευθύνη σειράς οργανισμών στην Τουρκία, στους οποίους έχουν ανατεθεί καθήκοντα εκτέλεσης του προϋπολογισμού. Η Επιτροπή διενεργεί εκ των προτέρων και εκ των υστέρων ελέγχους των διαδικασιών υποβολής προσφορών, σύναψης συμβάσεων και εφαρμογής τους, ώστε να εξασφαλίζεται η συνέπεια με τα εγκριθέντα προγράμματα και η τήρηση των δημοσιονομικών κανόνων της ΕΕ. Η ελεγκτική αρχή επαληθεύει την αξιοπιστία των λογιστικών στοιχείων που διαβιβάζονται στην Επιτροπή και εκτιμά κατά πόσον τα συστήματα διαχείρισης και ελέγχου είναι σύμφωνα με τις απαιτήσεις της συμφωνίας πλαισίου και του εκτελεστικού κανονισμού του ΜΠΒ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003271/14
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Pre-accession aid to Turkey

As part of its pre-accession aid to Turkey, the EU has provided Turkey with more than EUR 4.5 billion in funds.

Has the Commission checked how these funds are being spent in Turkey, so as to promote European values and principles? How does it ensure that the principle of 'more for more' is being respected?

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

In 2007-2013, EU financial assistance has been about EUR 4.8 billion to Turkey. This represents a relatively low amount of pre-accession assistance per capita (approx. EUR 9.26 p.p./year), when compared with other IPA beneficiaries.

The main objective of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is to help the beneficiary countries to face the challenges of European integration and implement the reforms needed to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. The basic policy documents setting out the priorities for programming assistance to Turkey under IPA are the Accession Partnership, the annual Enlargement Strategy Paper and the progress reports on progress made on the road towards the EU. The Multi-Annual Indicative Planning Document has been the strategic document for IPA for the period 2007-2013.

Programmes funded through IPA in Turkey are implemented under indirect management. Thus, the launch of calls for proposals/tenders and the contracting are under the responsibility of different institutions in Turkey which have been entrusted the budget implementation tasks. The Commission carries out *ex-ante* and *ex-post* controls of tendering, contracting and implementation, to guarantee the consistency with the adopted programmes and the respect of EU financial rules. The Audit Authority verifies the reliability of the accounting information provided to the Commission, and assesses whether the management and control systems conform to the requirements of the framework Agreement and the IPA Implementing Regulation.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003272/14
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(20 maart 2014)

Betreft: Europese pluimveehouders gaan failliet door Europese regels

EU-producenten van pluimvee moeten voldoen aan wetgeving op het gebied van bescherming van het milieu, dierenwelzijn en voedselveiligheid. Deze wetgeving heeft de productiekosten van pluimveevlees in de EU flink doen stijgen. Tegelijkertijd onderhandelt de EU met andere landen of groepen van landen voor liberalisatie van de handel in landbouwproducten. Uit het rapport van de Landbouwuniversiteit Wageningen ([1]) blijkt dat reeds in 2011 Argentinië en Brazilië op basis van de huidige invoerheffingen kipfilet al kunnen aanbieden onder de prijzen van EU-producenten. Naar mate de invoerheffingen verder worden verlaagd zullen ook Thailand, Oekraïne, Verenigde Staten en Rusland kipfilet kunnen aanbieden onder de prijzen van EU-producenten. Deze landen hoeven lang niet aan alle EU-wetgeving te voldoen voor bijvoorbeeld milieubescherming, dierenwelzijn en voedselveiligheid. De PVV heeft eerder vragen gesteld over soortgelijke casuïstiek, namelijk de eiersector ([2]), waarbij de Commissie een groot deel van de vragen niet heeft beantwoord ([3]).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het rapport „Competitiveness of the EU poultry meat sector”?

2. Weerspreekt de Commissie de constatering uit het rapport dat niet-EU-landen een veel minder strenge wetgeving hebben op het gebied van milieu, dierenwelzijn en voedselveiligheid?

3. Kan de Commissie aan pluimveehouders en burgers uitleggen waarom zij zich via allerlei EU-regels verregaand met de pluimveehouderijen bemoeit en er vervolgens voor zorgt dat ze kapot worden geconcurreerd door invoer toe te staan uit derde landen waar zaken als dierenwelzijn en voedselveiligheid een veel kleinere rol spelen?

4. Is de Commissie met de PVV eens dat zij willens en wetens dierenleed van elders in de Unie toelaat maar tegelijkertijd de Europese pluimveesector kapotmaakt door hun wél strenge regels op te leggen?

5. In het antwoord van de Commissie op de eerdergenoemde vragen stelt zij dat de regelgeving evenwicht weerspiegelt tussen dierenwelzijn/voedselveiligheid en de belangen van de bedrijfstak. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat er eerder sprake is van de import van dierenleed en de export van werkgelegenheid, en dus helemaal geen evenwicht? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(13 mei 2014)

1. De Commissie is op de hoogte van het rapport „Competitiveness of the EU poultry meat sector” ([4]) van LEI Wageningen UR.

2. In vergelijking met sommige derde landen kan de EU worden geacht een strengere wetgeving inzake dierenwelzijn te hanteren, maar niet noodzakelijk met betrekking tot landbouwpraktijken. Zo vereisen de hogere temperaturen in landen zoals Brazilië en Argentinië de facto een lagere bezettingsgraad van mestkuikens dan in de EU bij wet verplicht is. Bovendien hebben de EU en Brazilië een memorandum van overeenstemming ondertekend en werken zij samen aan verschillende kwesties op het gebied van dierenwelzijn.

Wat voedselveiligheid betreft moet volgens de EU-wetgeving al het voedsel dat in de handel wordt gebracht, ongeacht de herkomst ervan, voldoen aan de desbetreffende voorschriften van de levensmiddelenwetgeving of aan invoervoorwaarden die door de EU tenminste als evenwaardig worden erkend of aan de voorschriften van een specifieke overeenkomst tussen de Gemeenschap en het exporterende land, ingeval zo’n overeenkomst bestaat.

3. De bestaande EU-regels inzake dierenwelzijn zijn vastgesteld overeenkomstig de gewone wetgevingsprocedure, na breed overleg met alle betrokkenen, waaronder ook de sector. Verder vereist het Verdrag betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie ([5]) dat ten volle rekening wordt gehouden met hetgeen vereist is voor het welzijn van dieren.

Wat voedselveiligheid betreft, gelieve het antwoord in punt 2 te raadplegen.

([1]) http://www.avec-poultry.eu/system/files/archive/new-structure/avec/Communication/Study%20final%20version.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2013-009572+0+DOC+XML+V0//NL&language=nl.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-009572&language=NL.
([4]) http://www.eurocarne.com/pdf/informes/poultry_studio_avec.pdf
([5]) PB C 326 van 26.10.2012, blz. 47-390.

4. De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-006291/2013 [6].

5. Aangezien in sommige derde landen hoge dierenwelzijnsnormen die vergelijkbaar zijn met die van de EU de facto mogelijk zijn, kan niet worden geconcludeerd dat zich in alle gevallen zulke onevenwichtigheden voordoen.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003272/14
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Bankruptcies among poultry farmers due to European rules

Poultry producers in the EU have to comply with legislation on environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety. This legislation has led to a substantial rise in the cost of producing poultry meat in the EU. At the same time the EU is negotiating with other countries or groups of countries to liberalise the trade in agricultural products. A report by the Agricultural University of Wageningen ([1]) shows that in 2011, on the basis of the present import duties, Argentina and Brazil were already able to undercut EU producers' prices for chicken fillets. As import duties are cut still further, Thailand, Ukraine, the USA and Russia will also be able to offer chicken fillets for less than EU producers' prices. These countries do not need to comply with anything like all the EU legislation on environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety, etc. In the past the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) has asked questions about this kind of sophistry, particularly as regards the egg sector ([2]), to many of which the Commission has not replied ([3]).

1. Is the Commission aware of the report entitled 'Competitiveness of the EU poultry meat sector'?

2. Does the Commission deny the report's finding that non-EU countries have much less strict legislation on the environment, animal welfare and food safety?

3. Can the Commission explain to poultry farmers, and the general public, why it adopts all sorts of wide-ranging legislation for poultry farmers and then ensures that they are competed out of existence by allowing imports from third countries where much less store is set by matters such as animal welfare and food safety?

4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it knowingly allows the products of other countries' cruelty to animals into the EU, while putting the European poultry farming sector out of business by the strict rules it has to comply with?

5. In its answer to the earlier questions, the Commission states that the rules reflect the balance struck between animal welfare and the interests of the economic sector concerned. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that what is actually happening is that cruelty to animals is imported while jobs are exported, and thus there is no balance at all? If not, why not?

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

1. The Commission is aware of the 'LEI Wageningen UR' report Competitiveness of the EU poultry meat sector ([4]).

2. Compared to some third countries the EU may be deemed to have stricter animal welfare legislation, but not necessarily with regard to farming practices l. Indeed, in countries such as Brazil and Argentina higher temperatures require de facto lower density for broilers than what is mandatory by law in the EU. Furthermore, the EU has signed a memorandum of understanding with Brazil and is collaborating on several animal welfare issues.

As regards food safety, according to EU legislation, all food placed on the market, irrespective of its origin shall comply with the relevant requirements of the food law or for imports conditions recognised by the EU to be at least equivalent thereto or, where a specific agreement exists between the Community and the exporting country, with requirements contained therein.

3. Current EU animal welfare rules have been adopted according to ordinary legislative procedure, allowing for broad consultation of all involved, including also the industry. It is furthermore embedded in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ([5]) that full regard be paid to animal welfare.

([1]) http://www.avec-poultry.eu/system/files/archive/new-structure/avec/Communication/Study%20final%20version.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2013-009572+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-009572&language=EN
([4]) http://www.eurocarne.com/pdf/informes/poultry_studio_avec.pdf
([5]) OJ C 326, 26/10/2012, p. 47-390.

In relation to food safety, please refer to answer in point 2.

4. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006291/2013 [6].

5. Given the possibility that in some third countries comparable high welfare standards are de facto possible, it is not possible to conclude that such an imbalance exists in all cases.

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-003273/14
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(20 maart 2014)

Betreft: Nederlandse transporteurs binnenkort failliet

Volgens een beslissing van een Deense rechter mag een in dat land gevestigd transportbedrijf met een dochteronderneming in Estland, zijn vrachtwagenchauffeurs betalen naar de salarismaatstaven van Estland ([1]).

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Kim Johansen mag Oost-Europees betalen”?

2. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de genoemde rechterlijke beslissing?

3. Is de uitspraak van de rechter in lijn met bestaande EU-wetgeving? Zo ja, op basis van welke regelgeving mag Johansen afwijken van de Deense CAO?

4. Indien de uitspraak niet strijdig is met EU-wetgeving, is de uitspraak van de rechter toepasbaar op meer beroepsgroepen?

5. Welke effecten verwacht de Commissie op de lonen in de EU, wanneer bedrijven op grote schaal deze strategie gaan volgen? Zijn er verstorende effecten te verwachten?

6. Welke effecten verwacht de Commissie op werknemersstromen in de EU wanneer bedrijven op grote schaal deze strategie gaan volgen? Zijn er verstorende effecten te verwachten?

7. Welke waarde heeft een CAO volgens de Commissie?

8. Heeft de Commissie enig idee hoeveel Nederlandse chauffeurs er nu al werkloos zijn vanwege de verstorende effecten van arbeidsverdringing door de vele Oost-Europese werknemers in de West-Europese landen?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(22 mei 2014)

1. De Commissie is bekend met het bericht in kwestie.

2 tot 4. De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van de genoemde rechterlijke beslissing en heeft als beleid geen commentaar te geven op beslissingen van nationale rechtbanken.

5 & 6. Overeenkomstig Verordening (EC) nr. 1071/2009 betreffende de voorwaarden waaraan moet zijn voldaan om het beroep van wegvervoerondernemer uit te oefenen ([2]), kunnen vervoerders in alle lidstaten wegvervoersondernemingen opzetten, volgens het beginsel van het vrij verrichten van diensten en op voorwaarde dat zij aan de vereisten van de verordening voldoen. Chauffeurs die voor dergelijke ondernemingen werken, zijn nog steeds onderworpen aan de EU-bepalingen inzake de sociale omstandigheden in het wegvervoer ([3]). Indien wegvervoersondernemingen overeenkomstig de toepasselijke EU-wetgeving worden geëxploiteerd, worden er geen verstorende effecten verwacht op de markt voor wegvervoer.

7. De regels voor collectieve arbeidsovereenkomsten worden op nationaal niveau bepaald. Alle lidstaten hebben de IAO-kernverdragen inzake arbeidsomstandigheden geratificeerd, waaronder deze over sociaal overleg en collectieve onderhandelingen.

8. De Commissie beschikt niet over informatie omtrent het aantal werkeloze Nederlandse vrachtwagenchauffeurs. Volgens rapporten van belanghebbenden ([4]) daalde het aantal werknemers in de Nederlandse wegvervoerssector (mobiel en niet-mobiel personeel) van 145 000 in 2007 tot 134 000 in 2010. De vacaturegraad voor chauffeurs bedroeg in 2012 rond de 1 procent en lag in 2007 op 6,5 procent. Het lijkt erop dat de ontwikkelingen in de Nederlandse wegvervoerssector deze van de economie in haar geheel weerspiegelen. Als gevolg van de economische crisis ligt het volume aan EU-wegtransport momenteel 12% lager dan in 2007.

([1]) http://www.ttm.nl/nieuws/kim-johansen-mag-oost-europees-betalen/.
([2]) PB L 300 van 14.11.2009.
([3]) Verordening (EG) nr. 561/2006 tot harmonisatie van bepaalde voorschriften van sociale aard voor het wegvervoer, PB L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 1. Deze verordening bevat bepalingen inzake rij- en rusttijden.
([4]) Transport in Cijfers, Transport & Logistiek Nederland 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003273/14
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Dutch haulage firms will soon be bankrupt

According to a ruling by a Danish court, a haulage firm established in Denmark with a subsidiary in Estonia may pay its lorry drivers at the rates which apply in Estonia ([1]).

1. Is the Commission aware of the report (on the Dutch haulage trade site ttm.nl) entitled 'Kim Johansen allowed to pay East European rates'?

2. Is the Commission aware of the court ruling in question?

3. Is the court's ruling in line with current EC law? If so, under what European legislation is Johansen allowed to be exempt from Danish collective agreements?

4. If the ruling does not conflict with EC law, is it applicable to other occupational groups too?

5. What impact does the Commission expect there to be on pay in the EU if firms adopt this strategy on a large scale? Does it expect there to be distorting effects?

6. What impact does the Commission expect there to be on flows of workers in the EU if firms adopt this strategy on a large scale? Does it expect there to be distorting effects?

7. What, in the Commission's view, is a collective agreement worth?

8. Does the Commission have any idea how many Dutch lorry drivers are already unemployed, put out of work thanks to the distorting effects of the many East European workers in West European countries?

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

1. The Commission has been made aware of this report.

2 to 4. The Commission is not aware of the court ruling in question and has a policy of not commenting on the decisions taken by national courts.

5 and 6. According to Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 on access to the occupation of road transport operator ([2]), hauliers may establish road transport undertakings in any Member State, provided they meet the requirements of this regulation, in line with the principle of freedom to provide services. Drivers employed by such undertakings remain subject to the EU provisions on social conditions in road transport ([3]). If carried out in compliance with the applicable EU legislation, the operation of road transport undertakings is not expected to have a distortive effect on the road transport market.

7. Rules which apply to Collective agreements are defined at national level. All Member States have ratified the ILO core labour standard conventions, including those on social dialogue and collective bargaining.

8. The Commission does not have information about the number of unemployed Dutch lorry drivers. According to stakeholder reports ([4]), the number of employees in the Dutch road transport sector (mobile and non-mobile personnel) sunk from 145 000 in 2007 to 134 000 in 2010. The vacancy rate for drivers is close to 1% in 2012 against around 6.5% in 2007. The developments in the Dutch road transport labour market seem to follow the developments of the broader economy. Following the economic crisis, EU road transport volumes currently stand at a level 12% lower than in 2007.

([1]) http://www.ttm.nl/nieuws/kim-johansen-mag-oost-europees-betalen/
([2]) OJ L 300, 14.11.2009.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 on the harmonisation of certain social legislation relating to road transport, OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. This regulation contains provisions on driving time and rest periods.
([4]) Transport in Cijfers, Transport & Logistiek Nederlands 2013.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003275/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Raport dotyczący wzrostu cen

Unia Europejska przedstawiła nowy raport dotyczący wzrostu cen detalicznych energii w Europie. Raport przedstawia metody zmniejszania kosztów, które ponoszą konsumenci, i utrzymania konkurencyjności firm na światowym rynku. W latach 2008-2012 ceny detaliczne energii w Europie znacznie się podniosły, mimo że hurtowe ceny energii elektrycznej spadły, a hurtowe ceny gazu utrzymywały się na stałym poziomie. W zależności od krajów ceny są zróżnicowane, oznacza to, że niektórzy konsumenci płacą za energię od 2,5 do 4 razy więcej niż inni.

1. Wzrost cen energii w największym stopniu odbije się na kieszeni najuboższych mieszkańców Unii. Czy w związku z tym Komisja planuje wprowadzenie dodatkowych funduszy dla państw w celu zapewnienia przez nie środków socjalnych na rzecz ochrony najmniej zamożnych konsumentów?

2. Wciąż rośnie różnica cen energii pomiędzy UE a jej głównymi partnerami handlowymi. Międzynarodowa Agencja Energetyczna alarmuje, że może ona być powodem zmniejszenia udziału Unii w eksporcie towarów energochłonnych. Co zamierza zrobić Komisja, aby zmniejszyć tę różnicę?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Günthera Oettingera w imieniu Komisji
(26 czerwca 2014 r.)

1. Komisja uprzejmie prosi szanownego Pana Posła o zapoznanie się z odpowiedziami udzielonymi w tym przedmiocie na pytania wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej: E-004799/13 i E-000046/14 ([1]).

Państwa członkowskie zachowują kompetencje w zakresie systemów ustalania cen, wydatków publicznych i opodatkowania. Transfery fiskalne i inne środki z zakresu polityki społecznej (w tym fundusze społeczne) można uznać za instrumenty zapewniania ochrony gospodarstwom domowym znajdującym się w trudnej sytuacji.

2. W styczniu 2014 r. Komisja przyjęła równocześnie: komunikat, w którym określono ramy polityki w zakresie klimatu i energii na lata 2020-2030 oraz komunikat w sprawie polityki przemysłowej zatytułowany „Działania na rzecz odrodzenia przemysłu europejskiego". W ten sposób wyraźnie podkreślono przenikanie się zakresów polityk w dziedzinie klimatu, energii i przemysłu oraz konieczność prowadzenia prac nad określeniem działań, które będą się wzajemnie uzupełniać. Dekarbonizacja gospodarki, bezpieczeństwo energetyczne i reindustrializacja stanowią jednakowo ważne cele Unii, a wspólnym mianownikiem w opracowywaniu i realizacji przedmiotowych polityk musi być konkurencyjność.

W komunikacie w sprawie polityki przemysłowej dostrzeżono znaczenie wyzwania, jakim są duże różnice cen między Unią a jej konkurentami, oraz określono strategie, które umożliwią osiągnięcie celów w zakresie konkurencyjności i efektywności energetycznej w najbardziej opłacalny sposób.

W nowych wytycznych w sprawie pomocy państwa w zakresie ochrony środowiska i energii uwzględniono możliwość zmniejszenia obciążeń w wielu energochłonnych sektorach.

Należy jednak pamiętać, że ukierunkowane dopłaty muszą być finansowane przez innych odbiorców lub podatników. Prowadzą one również do ograniczenia zachęt do podejmowania działań zwiększających efektywność energetyczną oraz mogą spowodować zakłócenia konkurencji na jednolitym rynku energii, ponieważ są na ogół stosowane na szczeblu krajowym.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003275/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Report on rising prices

The EU has presented a new report on the rising retail energy prices in Europe. The report sets out ways of reducing the costs borne by consumers and of helping companies to maintain their competitiveness on the global market. In the period from 2008 to 2012, retail prices for energy rose significantly in Europe, in spite of the fact that wholesale electricity prices fell and wholesale gas prices remained stable. Prices differ depending on the country, with consumers in some countries paying between 2.5 and 4 times as much as consumers in other countries.

1. Rising energy prices hit the EU's poorest residents hardest. In this connection, is theCommission planning to establish additional funds for the Member States in order toensure that they can provide social funds to protect their poorest consumers?

2. The gap between the energy prices paid by the EU and those paid by its main tradingpartners continues to grow. The International Energy Agency is warning that it could leadto a reduction in the EU's share in exports of energy-intensive goods. What does theCommission intend to do to reduce this gap?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2014)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-004799/13 and E-000046/14 ([1]) in this respect.

Member States retain competence over pricing regimes, national spending and taxation. Fiscal transfers and other social policy measures (including social funds) can be considered to provide protection for vulnerable households.

2. On January 2014 the Commission simultaneously adopted the communication setting a policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030 and the Industrial Policy Communication for a European Industrial Renaissance. This provided a strong message about the intertwined nature of climate, energy and industrial policies and about the need to work for the definition of mutually-reinforcing actions. Decarbonisation of the economy, secure energy and reindustrialisation are equally important EU objectives and competitiveness must be the common denominator in defining and implementing all these policies.

The industrial policy communication also acknowledges the challenge of high price differentials between the EU and its competitors and identifies policies which will allow achieving competitiveness and energy efficiency objectives in the most cost-efficient way.

The new environmental and energy state aid guidelines include the possibility to allow reducing the burden for a number of energy intensive sectors.

However, it should be remembered that targeted subsidies must be financed by other consumers or by taxpayers. They also reduce incentives for taking efficiency measures and, as they are generally applied nationally, they may further distort competition within the single energy market.

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

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003276/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Reforma europejskiej inicjatywy obywatelskiej

Europejska inicjatywa obywatelska została przyjęta w traktacie z Lizbony. Rozporządzenie w sprawie inicjatywy zostało ujęte w traktacie. Realizacja inicjatywy obywatelskiej rozpoczęła się w dniu 1 kwietnia 2012 r. Jest to narzędzie „bezpośredniej demokracji" – dzięki niemu mieszkańcy Unii mogą przedkładać Komisji Europejskiej własne projekty ustaw. Ostatnio obywatelom Unii udało się zgłosić kilka inicjatyw, m.in. prawo do wody. Pokazuje to, że jest duże zainteresowanie obywateli Wspólnoty jej sprawami i możliwością oddziaływania na nią. Jednak według mnie procedura zgłaszania inicjatywy jest zbyt trudna. Jeszcze poważniejszym problemem jest brak zobowiązania Komisji do przyjęcia inicjatywy. Stoi to często na przeszkodzie we wprowadzaniu wartościowych pomysłów obywateli, którzy chcą działać na rzecz Europy.

1. Obecnie, aby złożyć inicjatywę obywatelską, należy znaleźć poparcie 1 miliona obywateli z aż 7 państw członkowskich. Proponowałbym Komisji złożenia projektu rozporządzenia zmniejszającego te wysokie wymagania, przełożyłoby się to na większy udział obywateli w życiu Wspólnoty. Jak Komisja odnosi się do mojej propozycji?

2. Chciałbym także zaproponować zwiększenie politycznej rangi europejskiej inicjatywy obywatelskiej. Tylko wtedy, gdy obywatele będą czuli, że Komisja jest zobowiązana rozpatrzyć ich projekt, będą mieli wystarczającą motywację do działania. Jakie jest zdanie Komisji na ten temat?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Przewodniczącego José Manuela Barroso w imieniu Komisji
(12 maja 2014 r.)

To sam Traktat o Unii Europejskiej, jego art. 11 ust. 4, stanowi, że „obywatele Unii w liczbie nie mniejszej niż milion, mający obywatelstwo znacznej liczby państw członkowskich" mogą przedłożyć europejską inicjatywę obywatelską. Powyższych postanowień nie można zatem zmienić, chyba że w drodze formalnej zmiany Traktatu. Wspomniane kryteria ilościowe ustanowione w Traktacie mają zapewnić, że wszystkie inicjatywy obywatelskie przedkładane Komisji stanowią odzwierciedlenie poglądów rozsądnej części społeczeństwa europejskiego i mają faktycznie europejski wymiar. Fakt, że już dwie takie inicjatywy uzyskały wystarczającą liczbę podpisów i zostały przedłożone Komisji, świadczy o tym, że osiągniecie pułapów wskazanych w Traktacie oraz odnośnym rozporządzeniu w sprawie europejskiej inicjatywy obywatelskiej jest możliwe.

Z art. 11 TUE oraz przepisów rozporządzenia w sprawie europejskiej inicjatywy obywatelskiej jasno wynika, że celem inicjatywy obywatelskiej, określonym w momencie sporządzenia traktatu lizbońskiego, jest wyposażenie obywateli europejskich w narzędzie umożliwiające im zwrócenie się do Komisji, by ta przedłożyła wniosek w sprawie aktu legislacyjnego, nie zaś nałożenie na Komisję zobowiązania. Komisja rozważa jednak gruntownie żądania formułowane w przedkładanych jej inicjatywach obywatelskich zgodnie z procedurą przewidzianą w art. 10 i 11 odnośnego rozporządzenia. Zarejestrowane lub przedłożone do tej pory inicjatywy obywatelskie dowodzą, że dzięki temu narzędziu udało się pobudzić ogólnoeuropejską debatę oraz uwzględnić zgłaszane kwestie w programie prac instytucji europejskich.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003276/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Reform of the European civic initiative

The European civic initiative was adopted in the Lisbon Treaty. The regulation on the initiative was incorporated into the treaty. Implementation of the civic initiative commenced on 1 April 2012. This is a 'direct democracy' instrument, by virtue of which EU residents can submit their own draft legislation to the European Commission. Recently, EU citizens have managed to submit several initiatives, including a right to water. This indicates that Community citizens have a substantial interest in its affairs and the possibility of influencing it. However, in my opinion, the procedure for submitting initiatives is too difficult. A more serious problem is the lack of any duty on the Commission to accept an initiative. It often obstructs the introduction of valuable ideas submitted by citizens, who want to act for Europe's benefit.

1. Currently, in order to submit a civic initiative, it is necessary to obtain the support of one million citizens from as many as seven Member States. I would propose that the Commission submit a draft regulation reducing these strict requirements, as this would bring about greater participation of citizens in Community life. How would the Commission respond to this proposal?

2. I would also propose an increase in the political importance of a European civic initiative as only when citizens feel that the Commission is bound to consider their draft legislation will they have sufficient motivation to act. What is the Commission's view of this matter?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Barroso au nom de la Commission
(12 mai 2014)

C'est le Traité sur l'Union européenne lui-même, notamment son article 11 (4), qui stipule que « des citoyens de l'Union, au nombre d'un million au moins, ressortissants d'un nombre significatif d'États membres» peuvent soumettre une Initiative Citoyenne Européenne (ICE). Ces dispositions ne peuvent donc être modifiées que par une révision formelle du Traité. Ces critères quantitatifs fixés par le Traité visent à assurer que toute ICE présentée à la Commission soit le reflet d'une partie raisonnable de l'opinion publique européenne et ait une véritable empreinte européenne. Le fait que deux ICE ont déjà recueilli le nombre nécessaire de signataires et ont été présentées à la Commission montre qu'il est tout à fait possible d'atteindre les seuils fixés par le Traité et le règlement relatif à l'ICE qui en découle.

Il ressort clairement de l'article 11 TUE, ainsi que du règlement relatif à l'ICE, que l'objectif de l'ICE, tel que conçue au moment de la rédaction du Traité de Lisbonne, est de mettre à disposition des citoyens européens un instrument leur permettant d'inviter la Commission à proposer un acte juridique, et non pas de créer une obligation pour la Commission. La Commission prend néanmoins sérieusement en considération les demandes formulées par les ICE qui lui sont présentées, conformément à la procédure prévue aux articles 10 et 11 du règlement relatif à l'ICE. Les ICE enregistrées ou présentées à ce jour démontrent que l'instrument réussit à générer des débats publics paneuropéens et à mettre les sujets évoqués à l'ordre du jour des institutions européennes.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003277/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Sektor aplikacji mobilnych

Według unijnych badań, w 2018 r. może przybyć pięć milionów miejsc pracy i 63 mld EUR w gospodarce Unii. Już milion programistów i osiemset tysięcy osób zajmujących się marketingiem i funkcjami pomocniczymi zatrudnionych jest na unijnym rynku aplikacji. Nowo wydane sprawozdanie wskazuje, że liczba ta do 2018 r. może wzrosnąć o prawie pięć milionów osób. Sektor aplikacji w chwili obecnej przynosi 17,5 mld EUR rocznie. Roczne przychody mogłyby wzrosnąć o 63 mld EUR w ciągu najbliższych pięciu lat dzięki zwiększeniu sprzedaży, intensyfikacji reklamy i rozszerzeniu zakresu zadań zleconych.

1. W celu osiągnięcia tego celu należałoby rozwiązać problem łączności bezprzewodowej, łączności transgranicznej i ograniczeń w usługach sieciowych w niektórych państwach członkowskich. Jakie działania podejmie Komisja w celu pokonania tych przeszkód?

2. Co robi Komisja, aby rozwiązać problem braku usług 4G i interoperacyjności między amerykańskimi platformami, takimi jak Facebook, iOS i Android?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącą Neelie Kroes w imieniu Komisji
(2 maja 2014 r.)

Powszechny dostęp do sieci bezprzewodowej, w formie łączy szerokopasmowych czy technologii M2M, przyczynia się do zwiększenia wzrostu gospodarczego, zatrudnienia i spójności społecznej. Unia dysponuje już pasmem szerokości 990 MHz, odpowiednim dla sieci telefonii komórkowej 4G – to więcej niż w innych regionach świata, np. w USA. Choć zaawansowane technologie mobilne, np. standard LTE, szybko rozprzestrzeniają się w większości państw członkowskich, zasięg sieci 4G jest nadal niewystarczający, a liczba subskrypcji na usługi 4G jest dosyć niska.

Upowszechnienie innowacyjnych bezprzewodowych usług i zastosowań może przynieść UE realne korzyści tylko w ramach dynamicznego jednolitego rynku. Celem wniosku Komisji dotyczącego rozporządzenia w sprawie łączności na całym kontynencie ([1]) jest ustanowienie przepisów ułatwiających transgraniczne świadczenie bezprzewodowych usług cyfrowych i dostęp do nich poprzez zniesienie roamingu, wykorzystanie crowdsourcingu do połączeń z siecią Wi-Fi oraz poprzez udostępnianie i spójne wykorzystanie widma na potrzeby bezprzewodowych usług szerokopasmowych. Komisja uważa, że konkurencja między platformami jest ważnym czynnikiem pobudzającym innowacyjność w przemyśle i źródłem korzyści dla konsumentów, również w odniesieniu do urządzeń przenośnych. Przepisy dotyczące obowiązku zapewnienia interoperacyjności i połączeń między użytkownikami końcowymi są zapisane w prawie UE.

Obecnie na rynku urządzeń przenośnych zapanowała specyficzna sytuacja: większość producentów ma siedzibę poza UE. Dlatego tak duże znaczenie ma odzyskanie przez Unię pozycji lidera w dziedzinie komunikacji bezprzewodowej – Komisja podejmuje w tym celu inicjatywy dotyczące mobilnych platform nowej generacji (5G).

([1]) COM(2013) 0627.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003277/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: The mobile applications sector

According to EU research, five million jobs and EUR 63 billion could be added to the EU economy by 2018. Already one million programmers and 800 000 marketing and auxiliary services workers are employed in the EU's applications sector. A newly published report predicts that this number could grow to almost five million employees by 2018. The applications sector currently brings in revenues of EUR 17.5 billion annually. These annual revenues could grow by EUR 63 billion over the next five years through increased sales, increased advertising and the expansion of the tasks that can be carried out using such applications.

1. In order to attain this objective, the issues of wireless connectivity, cross-borderconnectivity and restrictions on online services in some Member States must beaddressed. What steps will the Commission take to overcome these barriers?

2. What is the Commission doing to address the issue of the lack of 4G services and ofinteroperability between American platforms, such as Facebook, iOS and Android?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(2 May 2014)

Pervasive wireless connectivity for broadband access or machine-to-machine communications boosts economic growth, jobs and societal cohesion. The Union has already 990 MHz of spectrum suitable for 4G mobile networks — this is more than in other regions such as the USA. While advanced mobile technologies such as LTE are currently being rapidly deployed in most Member States, 4G coverage is still dissatisfactory and the number of 4G subscriptions is quite low.

The EU can truly take advantage of the penetration of innovative wireless services and applications only within a vibrant Single Market. In its proposal for a Connected Continent Regulation ([1]), the Commission aims at establishing rules facilitating the cross-border provision of and access to wireless digital services through the abolition of roaming, Wi-Fi crowdsourcing and by making available and coherently using spectrum for wireless broadband. The Commission considers platform competition a major driver for industrial innovation and consumer benefits, also regarding mobile devices. Mandatory rules for interoperability and end-to-end connectivity of such devices are enshrined in EC law.

However, within the current mobile device ecosystem, most device manufacturers are not EU-based. It is of crucial importance that the Union regains leadership in the wireless communications space, which the Commission actively supports also with its initiatives on next-generation mobile platforms (5G).

([1]) COM(2013)627.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-003278/14
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 marca 2014 r.)

Przedmiot: Rozbudowa sieci transportowej TEN-T

Polska ma szansę otrzymać fundusze w ramach rozbudowy europejskiej sieci transportowej TEN-T. Z pewnością jest to szansa dla Polski na unowocześnienie infrastruktury drogowej. Parlament Europejski przyjął dokument precyzujący kształt funduszy. Dokument wyznacza priorytety w zakresie budowy nowych szlaków komunikacyjnych. Zanalizowano, które szlaki komunikacyjne są niezbędne do sprawnego transportu osób i towarów na terytorium całej Unii Europejskiej. Nieskoordynowana plątanina dróg zostanie zastąpiona unowocześnioną siecią, tzw. kręgosłupem europejskiego transportu. Zakłada się, że przyczyni się to do wzrostu konkurencyjności i rozwoju gospodarczego. Polska weźmie udział w przedsięwzięciu, więc z pewnością skorzystamy i my. Jednak mam kilka pytań do Komisji Europejskiej co do kształtu nowej inicjatywy.

1. Do TEN-T nie udało się włączyć szlaku Via Carpathia. Ma on 683 kilometry i przebiega po drogach S-8 i S-19 od granicy polsko-litewskiej przez Budzisko, Augustów, Lublin, Rzeszów do granicy polsko-słowackiej. Via Carpathia stanowi kluczowe połączenie ośrodków regionalnych na wschodzie Polski, czyli Białegostoku, Lublina, czy też Rzeszowa. W związku z tym chciałbym dowiedzieć się, czy Komisja zamierza w jakiś inny sposób wspomóc budowę szlaku Via Carpathia?

2. Czym kierowano się, nie włączając tego strategicznego dla Polski szlaku do TEN-T. Wschodnia część Polski jest obecnie najsłabiej rozwiniętą częścią kraju. Czy takie rozwiązanie nie kłóci się z polityką spójności?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącego Komisji Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(15 maja 2014 r.)

Odcinek od Białegostoku do granicy słowackiej kwalifikuje się do finansowania z unijnych funduszy strukturalnych i inwestycyjnych. Odcinek transgraniczny z Suwałk do granicy litewskiej kwalifikuje się do finansowania w ramach instrumentu „Łącząc Europę”.

W następstwie dyskusji o potencjalnie negatywnym wpływie na środowisko rząd polski zgodził się ograniczyć negatywne dla środowiska skutki na odcinku drogi S8 Białystok-Augustów-Suwałki i nie przekształcać tego odcinka drogi w drogę ekspresową. Nie stanowi on zatem części sieci TEN-T.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003278/14
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Development of the TEN-T transport network

Poland may receive funds for the development of the TEN-T European transport network. This is undoubtedly an opportunity for Poland to modernise its road infrastructure. Parliament has adopted a document setting out the funding arrangements. The document lays out priorities in the area of building new transport routes. An analysis was included on which transport routes would be vital for the efficient transport of people and goods throughout the European Union. An uncoordinated tangle of roads will be replaced with a modernised network which has been termed the 'backbone of the European transport system'. It is anticipated that this will lead to increased competitiveness and economic development. Poland will be participating in the initiative, so we are sure to benefit. However, I have a number of questions to put to the Commission regarding the organisation of the new initiative.

1. The Via Carpathia route was not included in the TEN-T network. It is 683 kilometres long and runs from the Polish-Lithuanian border along the S-8 and S-19 roads through Budzisko, Augustów, Lublin and Rzeszów to the Polish-Slovakian border. The Via Carpathia is a crucial link for eastern Poland's regional centres, such as Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów. Does the Commission intend to provide some other form of support for the construction of the Via Carpathia?

2. What was the reason for not including this route — which is of strategic importance to Poland — in the TEN-T network? The eastern part of Poland is currently the least developed part of the country. Does the failure to include this route not conflict with cohesion policy?

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

The section from Bialystok to the Slovakian border is eligible for funding from the EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The cross-border section from Suwałki to the Lithuanian border is eligible for Connecting Europe Facility funding.

Following discussions on the potentially negative environmental impact, the Polish Government agreed to limit the negative effects on the environment on the S8 Bialystok-Augustów- Suwałki road section and not turn this road section into an expressway. It is therefore not part of the TEN-T network.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003279/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Folosirea copiilor-soldați în unele state din Africa

Problema înrolării minorilor în armatele unor state sau în cadrul unor grupări combatante continuă să îngrijoreze comunitatea internațională. Pe lângă faptul că încalcă Convenția de la Geneva, astfel de situații ridică numeroase semne de întrebare cu privire la angajamentul de promovare a respectării drepturilor omului în lume.

Africa este probabil continentul cel mai afectat de folosirea copiilor-soldați. Estimările variază, de la câteva zeci de mii de minori folosiți în operațiuni militare, până la câteva sute de mii.

Deține Înaltul Reprezentant informații cu privire la numărul real al minorilor folosiți în operațiuni militare în Africa?

Care este abordarea Uniunii Europene față de folosirea copiilor-soldați? Care sunt mijloacele pe care le are Uniunea la dispoziție pentru a descuraja acele state din Africa unde continuă să se practice înrolarea copiilor-soldați?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(26 mai 2014)

Promovarea și protecția drepturilor copilului reprezintă o preocupare prioritară pentru UE și pentru statele sale membre. Prin urmare, UE depune eforturi pentru a consolida protecția minorilor și pentru a promova drepturilor inerente ale acestora.

Deși recunoaște că de majoritatea covârșitoare a cazurilor de încălcări grave ale drepturilor copiilor sunt responsabili actorii nestatali, UE susține cu fermitate faptul că statele au responsabilitatea primară de a-și proteja propria populație, inclusiv copiii, împotriva abuzurilor și a încălcărilor drepturilor omului.

Din acest motiv, UE a desfășurat activități de lobby pentru a convinge cele 8 state care încă folosesc sau recrutează copii în conflictele armate să se alăture campaniei „Copii, nu soldați", care a fost lansată de Reprezentantul Special al ONU, dna L. Zerrougui, și de directorul executiv al UNICEF, dl A. Lake, la New York, la 6 martie 2014, și să semneze și să pună pe deplin în aplicare, până în 2016, planurile de acțiune în acest domeniu. UE este, de asemenea, pregătită să sprijine demobilizarea și reintegrarea copiilor asociați unor grupări armate în contextul negocierilor de pace (de exemplu în Columbia, Myanmar, Filipine), în cazul în care aceste grupuri semnează și încep să pună în aplicare planul de acțiune împreună cu ONU.

În special în ceea ce privește Africa, numărul efectiv al minorilor care participă la operațiuni militare este dificil de evaluat. Acesta variază în funcție de reizbucnirea conflictelor, precum în Republica Centrafricană sau în Sudanul de Sud.

Există un dialog continuu și o cooperare practică între UE, ONU și Uniunea Africană în ceea ce privește copiii și conflictele armate. De exemplu, în timpul summitului UE-Africa din aprilie 2014, chestiunea copiilor și a altor grupuri vulnerabile a fost ridicată în contextul discuțiilor privind securitatea și dezvoltarea. De asemenea, la 17 septembrie 2013, UE a organizat la Addis Abeba, împreună cu Uniunea Africană, ONU și Banca Mondială, un workshop cu tema copiii și conflictele armate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003279/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Use of child soldiers in some African countries

The recruitment of minors by some countries' armies and by armed groups continues to cause concern in the international community. As well as being in breach of the Geneva Convention, the situation raises a large number of questions regarding the commitment to promote respect for human rights across the world.

Africa is probably the continent that is most affected by the use of child soldiers. Estimates of the number of minors used in military operations vary from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand.

Does the High Representative have any information on the actual number of minors used in military operations in Africa?

What is the European Union's approach on the use of child soldiers? What means are available to the Union to discourage those African countries that continue to enlist child soldiers?

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

Promotion and protection of the rights of the child is a priority concern for the EU and its Member States. Therefore, the EU strives to strengthen their protection and promote their inherent rights.

While the EU recognises that non-State actors account for the overwhelming majority of grave violations against children, it strongly holds that the States have primary responsibility for the protection of their population, including children, from human rights abuses and violations.

For that reason, the EU has been lobbying 8 remaining States that still use or recruit children during armed conflict to join the 'Children, Not Soldiers' campaign which was launched by the UN Special Representative L. Zerrougui and the Unicef Executive Director A. Lake in New York on 6 March 2014 and to sign and implement fully the action plans in this area by 2016. The EU is also ready to support demobilisation and reintegration of children associated with armed groups in the context of peace-processes (e.g. Colombia, Myanmar, Philippines) if those groups sign and start implement the action plan with the UN.

Regarding Africa specifically, the actual numbers of minors used in military operations is difficult to assess. It varies depending on the resurgence of conflicts such as in Central African Republic or in South-Sudan.

There is an on-going dialogue and practical cooperation between the EU, the UN and the African Union on children and armed conflict. For example, during the April 2014 EU-Africa summit, the situation of children and of other vulnerable groups was raised in the context of discussions on security and development. The EU also co-organised a workshop on Children and Armed Conflicts with the African Union, UN and the World Bank in Addis Ababa on 17 September 2013.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003280/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Folosirea copiilor-soldați în unele state din Asia

Problema înrolării minorilor în armatele unor state sau în cadrul unor grupări combatante continuă să îngrijoreze comunitatea internațională. Pe lângă faptul că încalcă Convenția de la Geneva, astfel de situații ridică numeroase semne de întrebare cu privire la angajamentul de promovare a respectării drepturilor omului în lume.

Există o serie de state din Asia (Myanmar/Birmania, Sri Lanka, Nepal etc.) unde folosirea copiilor-soldați de către forțe rebele sau chiar guvernamentale rămâne o practică răspândită.

Deține Înaltul Reprezentant informații cu privire la numărul real al minorilor folosiți în operațiuni militare în Asia?

Care este abordarea Uniunii Europene față de folosirea copiilor-soldați? Care sunt mijloacele pe care le are Uniunea la dispoziție pentru a descuraja acele state din Asia care continuă să practice înrolarea copiilor-soldați?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(4 iunie 2014)

Promovarea și protecția drepturilor copilului reprezintă o prioritate a politicii UE în domeniul drepturilor omului. Mai multe țări asiatice, printre care Afganistan, Myanmar/Birmania și Filipine, sunt într-adevăr în continuare pe lista ONU a țărilor în care copiii sunt recrutați, folosiți sau vizați de către stat și/sau de către alte părți în situații de conflict armat. Partidul maoist UCPN-M din Nepal a fost șters de pe listă în urma unei misiuni a unei echipe de monitorizare a ONU care a avut loc în decembrie 2011. În Sri Lanka nu se mai recrutează copii-soldați, părțile în cauză fiind șterse de pe listă de ONU în 2012. Cu toate acestea, Sri Lanka trebuie să ia măsuri pentru a-i ancheta și a-i urmări în justiție pe cei responsabili de recrutarea copiilor în timpul războiului civil.

Activitățile UE se ghidează după Orientările UE din 2003 privind copiii și conflictele armate, a căror strategie de punere în aplicare a fost revizuită în 2014, concentrându-se asupra autorilor recidiviști. În acest context, UE sprijină activ inițiativa „Copii, nu soldați" a reprezentantului special L. Zerrougui și a UNICEF de eradicare a recrutării și folosirii copiilor de către forțele armate guvernamentale până în 2016. În prezent, UE este angajată în dialoguri cu cele 8 țări vizate, printre care Afganistan și Myanmar, solicitându-le să se alăture acestei inițiative și să își pună în aplicare propriile planuri de acțiune. În cadrul procesului de pace din Nepal, la care UE a avut o contribuție majoră, reabilitarea copiilor-soldați implicați în conflict (1995-2006) a fost considerată o reușită. Politica UE vizează, de asemenea, să ridice chestiunile legate de situația „copiilor în conflictele armate" în dialogurile politice și pe tema drepturilor omului purtate cu țările vizate și să includă măsuri de sprijinire a copiilor afectați de conflictele armate în documentele de programare a ajutoarelor pentru perioada 2014-2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003280/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Use of child soldiers in some Asian countries

The recruitment of minors by some countries' armies and by armed groups continues to cause concern in the international community. As well as being in breach of the Geneva Convention, the situation raises a large number of questions regarding the commitment to promote respect for human rights across the world.

The use of child soldiers by rebel forces, or even by government forces, remains a widespread practice in a number of Asian countries (Myanmar/Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal etc.).

Does the High Representative have any information on the actual number of minors used in military operations in Asia?

What is the European Union's approach on the use of child soldiers? What means are available to the Union to discourage those Asian countries that continue to enlist child soldiers?

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

The promotion and protection of the rights of the child is a priority of the EU's human rights policy. Several Asian countries, including Afghanistan, Myanmar/Burma and the Philippines, remain indeed on the UN list of countries where children are recruited, used or targeted in situation of armed conflicts by State and/or other parties. Nepal's Maoist party UCPN-M has been delisted following a mission by a UN monitoring team in December 2011. Child soldiers are no longer recruited in Sri Lanka with parties delisted by the UN in 2012. However, action remains to be taken by Sri Lanka to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the recruitment of children during the civil war.

The EU's work is guided by the 2003 EU guidelines on children and armed conflict, whose implementation strategy has been revised in 2014, focusing on persistent perpetrators. In this context, the EU actively supports the initiative 'Children, Not Soldiers' of the Special representative L. Zerrougui and Unicef to eradicate child recruitment and use by government armed forces by 2016. The EU is currently engaging with the 8 targeted countries, including Afghanistan and Myanmar, calling on them to join this initiative and to implement their respective Action Plans. In the Nepalese peace process, to which the EU was one of the major contributors, the rehabilitation of child soldiers involved in the conflict (1995-2006) has been considered as successful. The EU's policy is also to raise 'children in armed conflict' issues in political and human rights dialogues with the concerned countries and to include support to children affected by armed conflict in the assistance programming documents for 2014-2020.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003281/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Folosirea copiilor-soldați în unele state din America de Sud

Problema înrolării minorilor în armatele unor state sau în cadrul unor grupări combatante continuă să îngrijoreze comunitatea internațională. Pe lângă faptul că încalcă Convenția de la Geneva, astfel de situații ridică numeroase semne de întrebare cu privire la angajamentul de promovare a respectării drepturilor omului în lume.

Există o serie de state din America de Sud (Bolivia, Columbia etc.) unde folosirea copiilor-soldați de către forțe rebele sau chiar guvernamentale rămâne o practică răspândită.

Deține Înaltul Reprezentant informații cu privire la numărul real al minorilor folosiți în operațiuni militare în America de Sud?

Care este abordarea Uniunii Europene față de folosirea copiilor-soldați? Care sunt mijloacele pe care le are Uniunea la dispoziție pentru a descuraja acele state din America de Sud care continuă să practice înrolarea copiilor-soldați?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(7 mai 2014)

Înaltul Reprezentant/Vicepreședinte împărtășește preocuparea distinsei doamne deputat cu privire la utilizarea copiilor-soldați. Deși America de Sud nu este cea mai afectată parte a lumii în ceea ce privește acest fenomen, copiii, care sunt adesea recrutați în mod forțat, sunt utilizați de unele grupuri armate nonstatale.

Acest lucru se întâmplă în special în Columbia, unde grupurile de gherilă continuă să recruteze minori. Din acest motiv, problema copiilor-soldați reprezintă una dintre prioritățile UE în domeniul drepturilor omului în Columbia, îndeosebi în cadrul dialogului purtat cu autoritățile naționale referitor la drepturile omului. Problema copiilor utilizați în conflictele armate a fost, de asemenea, unul dintre principalele subiecte abordate în cursul unui seminar pe tema drepturilor omului organizat de delegația UE în decembrie 2012, la care au participat vicepreședintele Columbiei, precum și experți și mulți reprezentanți ai societății civile. În plus, UE și unele state membre sprijină proiecte care abordează aceste probleme, în special problema reprezentată de recrutarea forțată a copiilor-soldați de către grupurile armate ilegale, fie prin măsuri de prevenire, fie contribuind la reintegrarea foștilor copii-soldați.

SEAE nu are cunoștință de existența copiilor-soldați în Bolivia.

În general, copiii utilizați în conflicte armate reprezintă una dintre prioritățile politicii UE în domeniul drepturilor omului. Ca parte a acestei politici, UE sprijină pe deplin inițiativa comună a Reprezentantului special L. Zerrougui și a UNICEF, „Copii, nu soldați", care vizează eradicarea, până în 2016, a fenomenului de recrutare și utilizare a copiilor de către forțele armate guvernamentale. Începând cu jumătatea lunii februarie 2014, delegațiile UE au încurajat insistent guvernele locale din țările relevante să se alăture acestei inițiative și să își pună în aplicare planurile de acțiune.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003281/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Use of child soldiers in some South American countries

The recruitment of minors by some countries' armies and by armed groups continues to cause concern in the international community. As well as being in breach of the Geneva Convention, the situation raises a large number of questions regarding the commitment to promote respect for human rights across the world.

The use of child soldiers by rebel forces, or even by government forces, remains a widespread practice in a number of South American countries (Bolivia, Colombia, etc.).

Does the High Representative have any information on the actual number of minors used in military operations in South America?

What is the European Union's approach on the use of child soldiers? What means are available to the Union to discourage those South American countries that continue to enlist child soldiers?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President shares the Honourable Member's concern about the use of child soldiers. While South America is not the part of the world worst affected by this phenomenon, children, often forcefully recruited, are used by some non-State armed groups.

This is in particular the case in Colombia, where guerrilla groups continue to recruit minors. For this reason, the issue of child soldiers is one of the EU's priorities in the area of human rights in Colombia, in particular as part of the human rights dialogue with the authorities. The issue of children in armed conflict was also one of the main topics addressed during a seminar on human rights that was organised by the EU Delegation in December 2012 was attended by the Vice-President of Colombia as well as experts and many representatives of civil society. In addition, the EU and some of its Member States support projects that address these problems, in particular forced recruitment of child soldiers by illegal armed groups, either through prevention or through help in the reintegration of former child soldiers.

The EEAS is not aware of the existence of child soldiers in Bolivia.

More generally, children in armed conflicts are one of the priorities in the EU's Human Rights Policy. As part of this policy the EU fully supports the initiative of Special representative L. Zerrougui and Unicef 'Children, Not Soldiers' that aims to eradicate child recruitment and use by government armed forces by 2016. Since mid-February 2014, EU Delegations have strongly encouraged the local governments in relevant countries to join the initiative, and to implement their respective Action Plans.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003282/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Situația drepturilor omului în Iran

Recent, Înaltul Reprezentant a efectuat o vizită în Iran, unde a avut întrevederi cu mai mulți oficiali de rang înalt, precum și cu reprezentanți ai societății civile. Printre subiectele de discuție s-a aflat și situația drepturilor omului din Iran.

Fie că este vorba despre libertatea presei, libertatea de exprimare, drepturile femeilor sau drepturile minorităților, Iranul rămâne în vizorul mai multor organizații internaționale neguvernamentale care monitorizează situația drepturilor omului.

Care va fi abordarea Uniunii Europene față de Iran în problematica drepturilor omului, dat fiind că se constată o anumită deschidere a noului regim de la Teheran?

Care sunt pârghiile aflate la dispoziția Uniunii pentru a determina Iranul să avanseze reformele democratice și să nu mai tolereze încălcările repetate ale drepturilor omului?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(21 mai 2014)

ÎR/VP împărtășește pe deplin îngrijorările grave și persistente ale Parlamentului cu privire la situația drepturilor omului în Iran. În pofida unor semnale pozitive limitate, angajamentele asumate de președintele Rohani în domeniul drepturilor omului nu au fost puse în aplicare, până în prezent, într-o măsură semnificativă.

În consecință, drepturile omului au constituit un subiect important pe agenda vizitei ÎR/VP în Iran. În cadrul reuniunilor pe care le-a avut atât cu oficiali iranieni, cât și cu reprezentanți ai societății civile, ÎR/VP a abordat toate aspectele esențiale și a exprimat îngrijorarea UE cu privire la acest domeniu important.

Interlocutorii instituționali au confirmat interesul Iranului în abordarea subiectelor referitoare la drepturile omului, iar ministrul de externe Zarif și ÎR/VP au convenit asupra analizării în continuare a posibilității de reluare a dialogului UE — Iran privind aspecte legate de drepturile omului. În acest scop, domnul Lambrinidis, Reprezentantul Special al Uniunii Europene, va vizita Iranul la momentul oportun pentru a evalua sfera de aplicare și modalitățile unui dialog autentic, care ar trebui să aibă ca rezultat îmbunătățiri concrete.

Progresele înregistrate în materie de reforme democratice în Iran vor fi esențiale pentru consolidarea relațiilor bilaterale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003282/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights situation in Iran

The High Representative recently visited Iran, where she held talks with several high-ranking officials, as well as representatives of civil society. The subjects covered in these talks included the human rights situation in Iran.

Iran remains the focus of attention for several international non-governmental organisations that are monitoring the human rights situation, whether in terms of freedom of the press, freedom of expression, women's rights or minority rights.

What approach will the European Union take towards Iran on the subject of human rights, given that we are seeing a certain degree of openness on the part of the new regime in Tehran?

What levers are available to the Union to persuade Iran to make progress on democratic reforms and no longer to tolerate repeated violations of human rights?

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

The HR/VP fully shares the Parliament's serious and persisting concerns over the human rights situation in Iran. Despite some limited positive signals, President Rohani's human rights commitments have not seen significant implementation so far.

Therefore human rights featured prominently in HR/VP Ashton's visit to Iran. She addressed all the main issues and voiced EU's concern in this important area both with the Iranian officials and the representatives of the civil society she met.

The institutional interlocutors confirmed Iran's interest in discussing human rights and Foreign Minister Zarif and HR/VP agreed on exploring further the possibility of resuming an EU/Iran dialogue on human rights issues. In this regard, EUSR Lambrinidis will visit Iran when appropriate to assess the scope and modalities for a genuine dialogue that should bring about tangible improvements.

Progress on democratic reforms in Iran will be key to enhancing bilateral relations.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003283/14
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: VP/HR — Situația minorităților religioase în Pakistan

Situația minorităților religioase din Pakistan continuă să provoace îngrijorare în rândul comunității internaționale. În ultimii ani au avut loc mai multe atacuri asupra unor comunități religioase (creștină, șiită etc.). Guvernul din Pakistan nu a părut capabil să oprească aceste atacuri.

În acest context, care este abordarea Uniunii Europene față de aceste încălcări repetate ale drepturilor omului în Pakistan?

Care sunt pârghiile aflate la dispoziția Uniunii pentru a determina Pakistanul să avanseze reformele democratice și să nu mai tolereze încălcările repetate ale drepturilor omului?

Răspuns dat de dna Ashton, Înalt Reprezentant/vicepreședinte, în numele Comisiei
(16 mai 2014)

1. ÎR/VP o invită pe stimata deputată să consulte răspunsurile la întrebările E-011378/2013 și E-010897/2013.

2. UE s-a angajat în susținerea procesului democratic din Pakistan prin finanțarea unor proiecte de consolidare a capacităților în instituțiile federale și de la nivelul provinciilor, acordând sprijin și pentru protecția drepturilor omului, accesul la justiție al grupurilor vulnerabile și consolidarea organizațiilor societății civile. UE este pregătită să sprijine Pakistanul în vederea punerii în practică a recomandărilor formulate de către misiunea UE de observare a alegerilor din 2013 referitoare la îmbunătățirea procesului electoral în conformitate cu angajamentele sale internaționale, inclusiv prin încurajarea unei abordări favorabile incluziunii cu privire la toate minoritățile din Pakistan. UE monitorizează progresele înregistrate de Pakistan în domeniul drepturilor omului și își va consolida angajamentul de a sprijini, în cooperare cu statele membre, eforturile depuse de autoritățile pakistaneze în acest sens.

Începând din ianuarie 2014, Pakistanului i s-a acordat statutul de SPG Plus, cu condiția ca această țară să pună în aplicare în mod efectiv principalele convenții internaționale. În cadrul dialogurilor viitoare privind drepturile omului și SPG Plus, Uniunea Europeană va continua să aducă în discuție problema libertății religioase și a convingerilor, precum și a responsabilității Pakistanului în ceea ce privește protejarea tuturor pakistanezilor, inclusiv a creștinilor și a altor minorități, împotriva relelor tratamente, a torturii și a execuțiilor extrajudiciare. Mai mult, UE sprijină, de asemenea, libertatea religioasă și a convingerilor în Pakistan prin intermediul cooperării sale pentru dezvoltare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003283/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation of religious minorities in Pakistan

The situation of religious minorities in Pakistan continues to give cause for concern in the international community. There have been several attacks on various religious communities in recent years (such as the Christian and Shi'ite communities). The Pakistan Government has not appeared able to stop these attacks.

What is the European Union's approach in relation to these repeated violations of human rights in Pakistan?

What levers are available to the Union to persuade Pakistan to make progress on democratic reforms and no longer to tolerate repeated violations of human rights?

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

1. The HR/VP refers the honourable member to replies E-011378/2013 and E-010897/2013.

2. The EU is engaged in supporting the democratic process in Pakistan with funding for capacity-building projects in the federal and provincial institutions, including protection of human rights, access to justice for vulnerable groups and strengthening civil society organisations. The EU is ready to accompany Pakistan in following up on recommendations from the 2013 EU Election Observation Mission to improve the electoral process in line with its international commitments, including by encouraging an inclusive approach to all of Pakistan's minorities. The EU is monitoring Pakistan's progress in the field of human rights and will strengthen its engagement in support of Pakistani efforts to this effect in cooperation with Member States.

From January 2014 Pakistan has been granted GSP+ status, contingent on the effective implementation of core international conventions. In future dialogues on human rights and GSP+ the European Union will continue to raise the issue of freedom of religion and belief and responsibility of Pakistan in protecting all Pakistanis, including Christian and other minorities, against mistreament, torture and extrajudicial killings. In addition the EU also provides support to freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan through its development cooperation.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003286/14
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: Eliminarea tarifelor la roaming din decembrie 2015

În data de 18 martie, Comisia pentru industrie, cercetare și energie a Parlamentului European a aprobat Raportul referitor la propunerea de regulament al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului de stabilire a unor măsuri privind piața unică europeană a comunicațiilor electronice și de realizare a unui continent conectat și de modificare a Directivelor 2002/20/CE, 2002/21/CE și 2002/22/CE și a Regulamentelor (CE) nr. 1211/2009 și (UE) nr. 531/2012.

Eurodeputații cer, printre altele, eliminarea tarifelor la roaming începând cu 15 decembrie 2015, însă prevăd existența unor măsuri care să protejeze companiile de telecomunicații împotriva unor practici abuzive. Liniile directoare care ar urma să definească aceste situații excepționale care pot face obiectul unor derogări de la eliminarea taxelor de roaming ar urma să fie definite de Comisia Europeană.

A fost consultată Comisia cu privire la posibilitatea unor astfel de excepțări? Care ar urma să fie criteriile pe baza cărora vor fi identificate acele situații excepționale care prevăd derogări?

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(5 mai 2014)

Comisia a luat notă de amendamentele votate în prima lectură de către Parlamentul European privind dispozițiile referitoare la serviciile de roaming din propunerea Comisiei la care face referire întrebarea distinsei membre.

În prezent, propunerea este în curs de examinare de către Consiliu. Odată ce regulamentul propus va fi adoptat de către colegislatori, Comisia, împreună cu comitetul relevant compus din reprezentanții statelor membre, va îndeplini sarcinile care îi sunt conferite prin aceste noi dispoziții.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003286/14
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Elimination of roaming charges from December 2015

On 18 March, the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted a report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down measures concerning the European single market for electronic communications and to achieve a connected continent and amending Directives 2002/20/EC, 2002/21/EC and 2002/22/EC and Regulations (EC) No 1211/2009 and (EU) No 531/2012.

Members are seeking the elimination of roaming charges from 15 December 2015, accompanied by measures to protect telecommunications companies against unfair practices. The task of drawing up guidelines concerning the exceptional circumstances under which the elimination of roaming charges might be waived would fall to the Commission.

Has the Commission been consulted on this matter? What would be the basic exemption criteria in such circumstances?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 May 2014)

The Commission took note of the amendments voted in first reading by the European Parliament on the roaming provisions of the Commission proposal referred to in the Honourable Member's question.

The proposal is currently being examined by the Council. Once the proposed regulation will be adopted by the co-legislators, the Commission, together with the relevant Member States' Committee, will fulfil the tasks conferred to it by these new provisions.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003287/14
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: Tabloul de bord privind justiția în Uniunea Europeană

Comisia Europeană a dat publicității cel de-al doilea tablou de bord privind justiția. Acesta evaluează justiția în materie civilă, comercială și administrativă din statele membre, oferind statistici utile care arată gradul de eficiență și eficacitate ale diverselor sisteme judiciare din statele membre.

Parlamentul European a aprobat recent un raport referitor la evaluarea justiției în ceea ce privește justiția penală și statul de drept în care cere, printre altele, extinderea actualului tablou de bord și la cauzele de natură penală.

Intenționează Comisia să extindă anul următor acest tablou de bord și la cauzele de natură penală?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(6 iunie 2014)

Tabloul de bord privind justiția în UE este un instrument de informare care alimentează procesul semestrului european ([1]), oferind date obiective referitoare la modul de funcționare a sistemelor judiciare naționale. Acesta se concentrează asupra litigiilor în materie civilă și comercială, precum și asupra cauzelor administrative pentru a sprijini statele membre în eforturile lor de îmbunătățire a mediului de afaceri și de depășire a crizei datoriilor suverane și a crizei financiare.

Comisia salută faptul că Parlamentul European sprijină în rezoluția sa ([2]) Tabloul de bord privind justiția în UE și încurajează Comisia să abordeze noi domenii legate de funcționarea sistemelor de justiție. Tabloul de bord privind justiția în UE este un instrument evolutiv care se va extinde treptat în ceea ce privește domeniile acoperite, indicatorii săi și metodologia utilizată. Astfel cum s-a indicat în Tabloul de bord 2014 privind justiția în UE ([3]), se va studia posibilitatea colectării de date privind funcționarea sistemelor de justiție în alte domenii specifice relevante pentru creșterea economică, precum infracțiunile economice și financiare. Comisia reamintește că posibilitatea de a extinde Tabloul de bord privind justiția în UE va depinde, de asemenea, de disponibilitatea datelor relevante.

([1]) Pentru informații suplimentare, vă rugăm să consultați site-ul: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_ro.htm
([2]) Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 4 februarie 2014 referitoare la Tabloul de bord al UE privind justiția — justiția în materie civilă și administrativă în statele membre este disponibilă la adresa: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=RO&reference=P7-TA-2014-0064.
([3]) Disponibil la adresa: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/effective-justice/news/140317_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003287/14
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: EU Justice Scoreboard

The European Commission has published the second Justice Scoreboard, providing an evaluation and useful statistics regarding the quality and efficiency of the various civil, commercial and administrative justice systems in the Member States.

The European Parliament has recently adopted a report on the evaluation of justice in relation to criminal justice and the rule of law, seeking to extend the current scoreboard arrangements to the field of criminal justice also.

Does the Commission accordingly intend to extend the Justice Scoreboard to criminal cases next year?

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

The EU Justice Scoreboard is an information tool that feeds the European Semester process ([1]) by providing objective data concerning the functioning of the national judicial systems. It focuses on litigious civil and commercial cases as well as administrative cases in order to assist Member States in their efforts to improve business climate and to overcome the sovereign debt and financial crisis.

The Commission welcomes that the European Parliament in its resolution ([2]) supports the EU Justice Scoreboard and encourages the Commission to cover new areas relating to the functioning of justice systems. The EU Justice Scoreboard is an evolving tool that will gradually expand in the areas covered, in the indicators and in its methodology. As indicated in the 2014 EU Justice Scoreboard ([3]), the possibility to collect data on the functioning of justice systems in other focused areas relevant for growth, such as financial and economic crimes, will be explored. The Commission recalls that the possibility to extend the EU Justice Scoreboard will also depend on the availability of relevant data.

([1]) More information available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_en.htm
([2]) European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on the EU Justice Scoreboard — civil and administrative justice in the Member States, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2014-0064
([3]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/effective-justice/news/140317_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-003288/14
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 martie 2014)

Subiect: Asistența macro-financiară pentru Ucraina

În 19 martie, Comisia Europeană a propus un nou program de asistență macro-financiară Ucrainei în valoare de 1 miliard de euro. Această asistență, vine să completeze pachetul deja agreat în data de 6 martie. De asemenea, sprijinul va fi complementar celui oferit de Fondul Monetar Internațional.

Are în vedere Comisia măsuri similare (punerea la dispoziție a unor diverse sume de bani sub forma asistenței macro-financiare) și pentru alte state din vecinătatea estică, în contextul în care presiunile Rusiei asupra vecinilor Uniunii Europene s-ar putea intensifica în perioada următoare?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(13 iunie 2014)

Asistența financiară a UE pentru Ucraina constă în măsuri concrete menite să contribuie la stabilizarea situației economice și financiare a Ucrainei, să ofere asistență pentru tranziție, să încurajeze reformele politice și economice și să sprijine dezvoltarea favorabilă incluziunii în avantajul tuturor cetățenilor ucraineni. Una dintre aceste măsuri este o asistență macrofinanciară (AMF) în valoare de 1 miliard EUR, aprobată de Consiliu la 14 aprilie, care completează programul de 610 milioane de EUR deja aprobat la 25 februarie 2013. Ambele măsuri fac parte din programul de asistență aprobat de Consiliu la 6 martie și vor fi oferite Ucrainei sub formă de împrumut, sub condiția realizării unor reforme substanțiale, menționate în programul de reformă convenit cu FMI. Acestea sunt, de asemenea, condiționate de măsuri specifice de politică convenite cu UE în cadrul unor memorandumuri de înțelegere pentru fiecare operațiune.

UE oferă o asistență financiară importantă Georgiei și Republicii Moldova în vederea sprijinirii procesului de reformă pentru un o perioadă stabilită, atât în cadrul Instrumentului european de vecinătate și parteneriat, cât și al programelor AMF.

Pentru Republica Moldova, această asistență cuprinde, doar în 2013, 135 de milioane EUR sub formă de ajutor (care urmează să fie implementat începând din 2014). Comisia poate înainta o propunere pentru o nouă operațiune AMF cu Republica Moldova, având în vedere recentele discuții cu FMI privind un nou program.

Pentru Georgia, această asistență cuprinde, doar în perioada 2011-2013, 180 de milioane EUR sub formă de ajutor — aproximativ 1,5 % din PIB-ul Georgiei. În august 2013, UE a adoptat o decizie privind un program AMF în valoare de 46 de milioane EUR, care urmează să fie oferit în mod egal sub formă de împrumuturi și granturi. Acesta nu a fost încă eliberat, întrucât Georgia nu a folosit fonduri din programul FMI. În cazul în care autoritățile convin cu FMI asupra unui nou program, UE va fi în măsură să reactiveze AMF în cel mai scurt timp.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003288/14
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Macro-financial assistance to Ukraine

On 19 March, the Commission proposed a new programme of macro-financial assistance to Ukraine worth EUR 1 billion. That assistance is in addition to the package already agreed on 6 March 2014. The assistance will also be in addition to the amount offered by the International Monetary Fund.

Is the Commission contemplating other similar measures (making various amounts available in the form of macro-financial assistance) for other Eastern neighbourhood countries, in circumstances where pressure from Russia on the EU's neighbours could intensify in the months to come?

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

The EU's financial assistance to Ukraine consists of concrete measures to help stabilise Ukraine's economic and financial situation, assist with transition, encourage political and economic reforms and support inclusive development for the benefit of all Ukrainians. One of these measures is a macro financial assistance (MFA) programme worth EUR 1 billion, approved by the Council on 14 April, to complement the EUR 610 million programme already approved on 25 February 2013. Both are part of the assistance package endorsed by the Council on 6 March, and will be provided to Ukraine as loans; conditional on substantial reforms outlined in the reform programme agreed with the IMF. They are also conditional on specific policy measures agreed with the EU in Memoranda of Understanding for each operation.

The EU has been providing substantial financial assistance to both Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to assist the reform process for a number of years, under both the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and MFA programmes.

For Moldova, this includes EUR 135 million of assistance just in 2013 (to be implemented starting from 2014). The Commission may bring forward a proposal for a new MFA operation with Moldova, given its recent talks with the IMF on a new programme.

For Georgia, this includes EUR 180 million of assistance in 2011-13 alone — about 1.5% of Georgia's GDP. In August 2013, the EU adopted a decision on a MFA programme of EUR 46 million, to be provided equally in loans and grants This has not yet been released since Georgia did not draw money from the IMF programme. If the authorities agree with the IMF on a new disbursing programme, the EU will be in a position to re-activate the MFA shortly.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003289/14
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Unfair practices in the car rental sector

It has come to my attention that in at least one Member State, some car rental companies have been forcing customers to pay hidden charges for fuel costs upon collection or return of a vehicle.

Could the Commission confirm that such practices are in breach of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC)?

What action has been taken by the Commission to ensure companies in the car rental sector in Member States are adequately informed of the provisions of Directive 2005/29/EC in order to ensure their practices are compliant?

What further action will be taken to ensure such unfair practices no longer take place?

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

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its response to parliamentary Question E-011289/2011 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2011-011289&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003290/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Refusal to extradite under a European arrest warrant

Mafia fugitive Domenico Rancadore has won his battle against extradition back to Italy after British Senior District Judge Howard Riddle ruled against the extradition. Judge Riddle made his decision following the ruling in a similar case involving the Court of Florence and Hayle Abdi Badre.

In the latter case, the Italian justice system did not offer sufficient guarantees to the British authorities that the treatment that Badre would have received in an Italian prison would be the same as he would have received in a British prison.

Judge Riddle said: 'The judgment of the administrative court is binding on me. The higher court accepted that a similar assurance given in that case was in good faith, but was not sufficient.' He added: 'I cannot distinguish this case from Badre. While it is true that I heard more up-to-date evidence than was available to the court in that case, my intended decision, as expressed above, was based squarely on my acceptance of an assurance that has recently, and in similar circumstances, been rejected by a higher court.'

In 2009, a British citizen, Martin Shields, was released from a Bulgarian jail after serving four years of a sentence that was subsequently overturned. He described the conditions in the jail as 'a living hell'.

Does the Commission understand that the precedent set in the Badre case effectively means that British judges are now unable to agree to extradite to Italy?

Does the Commission agree that there is an urgent need to assess standards across the EU in order for courts to identify states with sub-standard conditions, and to make informed decisions such as those taken in the Badre and Rancadore cases?

Does the Commission accept that the differing standards in judicial integrity and in prison conditions between Member States substantially undermine the integrity of the European arrest warrant?

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

The Commission is aware of the cases referred to, of the issues relating to detention conditions in particular in Italy and of the central importance of the obligation of the judicial authorities that take the individual decisions in European arrest warrant (EAW) cases to ensure that fundamental rights are respected ([1]).

In this regard, the Commission pointed out in its 2011 EAW implementation report ([2]) that surrender is not mandated where an individual judicial authority, taking into account in all the circumstances of the case, concludes that such surrender would result in a breach of a requested person's fundamental rights arising from unacceptable detention conditions.

The Commission is therefore aware of the importance of all aspects of detention to judicial cooperation. Arising out of the replies to the Commission Green Paper on detention in 2011 ([3]), the priority focus has been put on the implementation of existing instruments that allow people to serve sentences in their home country and provide, *inter alia*, alternatives to detention at pre- and post-trial stage as set out in the recent Commission report on the implementation of these instruments. ([4])

The Commission is committed to ensuring that respect for fundamental rights underpins all criminal proceedings in the EU as evidenced by the agreed ([5]) and pending ([6]) EU legislation on procedural rights. The Commission regrets that not all Member States participate in this system of common minimum rules.

([1]) See Article 1(3) and Recitals 12 and 13 of Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA on the European arrest warrant.
([2]) On the implementation since 2007 of the Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States. COM(2011) 175 Final.
([3]) COM(2011) 327 final.
([4]) COM(2014) 57 final on the implementation by the Member States of the framework Decisions 2008/909/JHA, 2008/947/JHA and 2009/829/JHA on the mutual recognition of judicial decisions on custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty, on probation decisions and alternative sanctions and on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention.
([5]) Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation, Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information, Directive 2013/48/EU on the right of access to a lawyer.
([6]) Proposals for Directives on procedural rights for children in criminal proceedings (COM(2013) 822/2), on the presumption of innocence (COM(2013) 821/2) and on legal aid (COM(2013) 824).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003291/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: European Network of Public Employment Services

In the context of the Commission proposal establishing a European Network of Public Employment Services (COM(2013)0430), can the Commission explain how the different national models can work together and who will bear the costs of this increased work volume? Can the Commission state which Member States do not engage sufficiently in 'mutual learning'?

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

The proposal for legislation to establish a European network of public employment services aims to provide a platform at European level, identifying good practice and fostering mutual learning. The objective is to help the public employment service in each Member State to improve its performance through structured and systematic assessment. Mutual learning should serve to detect those aspects (performance enablers or drivers) that may be the cause of differences in performance and thus to identify organisational factors, drivers and practice that are correlated with better outcomes. Under the new legal framework, all the Member States will be called to actively participate in this process. Those Member States that receive country-specific recommendations relating to their public employment service under the European Semester process will benefit in particular from such an analysis.

Funding to improve cooperation among public employment services at EU level will come from the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 2014-20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003292/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — On-going crisis in Ukraine: achievements of the EEAS

Could the VP/HR describe, in the light of the so-called 'referendum' of 16 March in Crimea, what she believes the European External Action Service (EEAS) has achieved thus far in respect of the on-going crisis in Ukraine?

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

The EU has strongly condemned the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russian forces and called on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces to the areas of their permanent stationing, in accordance with relevant agreements. In addition to the EU Heads of State and Government suspending talks with Russia on visa matters and the New Agreement on 6 March, the Foreign Affairs Council introduced travel restrictions and asset freezes on 17 March against persons responsible for actions which undermine or threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. In the absence of steps towards de-escalation, the European Council decided on 20 March, to expand the list of individuals to be subject to visa bans and asset freezes ([1]). Any further destabilising steps by Russia would lead to additional and far reaching consequences for relations in a broad range of economic areas between the EU and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand.

The EU signed the political part of the Association Agreement with Ukraine on 21 March, and on 14 April adopted unilateral trade measures to allow Ukraine to benefit substantially in the future from the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The EU is providing a support package which could bring Ukraine at least EUR 11 billion in loans and grants over the coming years to help with a programme of structural reforms, including fighting corruption and enhancing the transparency of fiscal operations ([2]). On 19 March the Commission proposed macro-financial assistance of up to EUR 1 billion to help Ukraine cover its urgent external financing needs in the context of the stabilisation and reform programme currently under preparation with the help of the IMF ([3]).

([1]) http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/141707.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-159_en.htm
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-281_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003293/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Children living in poverty in 2004

Could the Commission advise me of the number of children in the EU living below the poverty line in 2004, broken down by Member State?

Question for written answer E-003294/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Children living in poverty in 2009

Could the Commission advise me of the number of children in the EU living below the poverty line in 2009, broken down by Member State?

Question for written answer E-003295/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Children living in poverty in 2014

Could the Commission advise me of the number of children in the EU living below the poverty line in 2014, broken down by Member State?

Joint answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(27 May 2014)

The information requested by the Honourable Member can be found in the EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions and is most recently available for the year 2012. The table below presents the number of children (below 18 years old, in thousands) living in a household with an income below the poverty line where the latter is defined as 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after transfers.

Number of children living below the poverty line in 2012, 2009 and 2004 — in thousands			
	2004	2009	2012
EU28	:	:	19,600(e)
EU-27	:	18,991	19,421(e)
BE	363	371	387
BG	:	316	344
CZ	:	249	257
DK	108	127	122
DE	:	2,047	2,012
EE	64	51	42

IE*	247	221	202
EL	398	452	521
ES	1,895	2,202	2,508
FR	1,923	2,216(b)	2,516
HR	:	:	179
IT	2,555	2,568	2,741
CY	:	22	25
LV	:	101	85
LT	:	143	115
LU	19	23	25
HU	:	390	398
MT	:	17	17
NL	:	560	478
AT	249	213	271(b)
PL	:	1,682	1,526
PT	494	450	411
RO	:	1,318	1,380
SI	:	40	50
SK	:	156	193
FI	109	133	122
SE	256	257	324
UK	:	2,663	2,375(b)

(e) estimated
(b) break in series
: missing
* Ireland: 2011 data instead of 2012
Source: EU-SILC

More detailed information on child poverty can be found in the annex with the social inclusion indicators of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2013 Report of the European Commission ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=2023&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003297/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Legality of EU bailouts

Article 125 of the Lisbon Treaty states: 'The Union shall not be liable for or assume the commitments of central governments, regional, local or other public authorities, other bodies governed by public law, or public undertakings of any Member State…'

Could the Commission explain to me, therefore, the legal basis for the bailouts of Member States as a result of the economic crisis?

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

In the Pringle case, the European Court of Justice highlighted the compatibility of ESM financial assistance with Article 125 of the TFEU. In this respect, the ECJ highlighted that the article 125 does not prohibit the granting of all forms of financial assistance, only that the Union shall not be 'liable for… the commitments' or 'assume… commitments'. As such, and again as confirmed by the ECJ in the Pringle case, 'the ESM and the Member States who participate in it are not liable for the commitments of a Member State which receives stability support and nor do they assume those comittments, within the meaning of Article 125 TFEU'. Given the objective of Article 125 TFEU, what is prohibited is only the granting of financial assistance as a result of which the incentive of the recipient Member State to conduct a sound budgetary policy is diminished. This is not the case for the ESM since the grant of support by the ESM is subject to strict conditionality appropriate to the financial instrument chosen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003298/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Current status of the European External Action Service (EEAS) headquarters

Could the Vice-President/High Representative advise me as to the progress of construction of the EEAS headquarters as of the date of this question?

Specifically, is the project on time and within budget?

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

The construction of the EEAS Headquarters was finished between the end of 2011 and the middle of 2012. The EEAS started moving in the building in December 2011. The project was on time and the financial modalities, as agreed by the Budgetary Authority in 2011 were respected.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003299/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Package of regulatory technical standards

Can the Commission inform me whether or not an impact assessment was undertaken with a view to adopting the nine new regulatory technical standards needed to implement provisions of the Capital Requirements Regulation and Directive? If so, what was the outcome regarding UK banking?

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

Where a draft regulatory technical standard ('RTS') is developed by the European Banking Authority ('EBA'), it is the EBA that — in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 10(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 — analyses the impact of the RTS.

EBA undertook extensive market consultations and detailed analysis regarding the nine new RTS ([1]) before submitting the drafts to the European Commission. The European Commission did not make any substantive changes to the drafts as submitted by EBA. The impact assessment by EBA is done on EU-wide rather than on country-by-country basis.

The analysis for each of the RTS is included in the full version of the relevant draft, which can be found at the EBA's public website (http://www.eba.europa.eu/).

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-255_en.htm?locale=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003300/14
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(20 March 2014)

Subject: Posting of workers

How can the Commission reassure British citizens that the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services will not be detrimental to British workers? Why was this directive not enforced by the Commission at some point over the last 18 years?

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

Directive 96/71/EC ([1]) is a key instrument to prevent a race to the bottom in terms of working conditions in the EU. It obliges Member States (MS) to apply a core of employment conditions to workers posted to their territory where these conditions are laid down by law, regulation or administrative provision or in the construction sector by collective agreements or arbitrations awards that have been declared universally applicable. The monitoring and enforcement of the working and employment conditions of posted workers fall within the competence of the MS.

Recognising there are shortcomings in the way the directive is currently implemented, applied and enforced across the MS, the Commission proposed an enforcement directive ([2]), which was the basis for a new legal instrument just adopted by the European Parliament ([3]) and Council. The enforcement directive strikes a balance between the protection of workers' rights and the freedom to provide services and helps to avoid and combat abuses by providing the MS with more effective instruments for monitoring and enforcing the employment conditions of posted workers. The text in particular provides for a list of national control measures that the MS may apply to that end. Moreover, it foresees provisions on increased cooperation between administrations involved, improved access to information and the cross border enforcement of administrative fines and penalties.

According to the impact assessment ([4]) of the Enforcement Directive, UK is not amongst the countries receiving and sending the largest numbers of posted workers. In 2011, UK received 2.45% ([5]) and sent 2.34% of overall posted workers in the EU. This puts UK on the 9th place of the receiving countries and 12th of the sending ones.

([1]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997.
([2]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of service (COM(2012) 131 final of 21 March 2012).
([3]) The European Parliament voted the agreement reached with the Council in February in its last plenary session of April 2014 before the May elections.
([4]) SWD(2012) 63 — Part 1.
([5]) Based on administrative data from EU Member States on A1 forms issued according to Council Regulation (EC) No 833/2004 on the coordination of social security systems.