

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



session documents

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ORAL QUESTIONS

pursuant to Rule 41 of Rules of Procedure
for **QUESTION TIME**

on 26 October 1994

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PE 183.476

- * Consultation procedure
simple majority
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
simple majority
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
simple majority to approve the common position
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject or amend the common position
- *** Assent procedure
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to give assent
except for simple majority under Articles 8a, 105, 106, 130d and 228 EC

- ****I Codecision procedure (first reading)
simple majority
- ****II Codecision procedure (second reading)
simple majority to approve the common position
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members either to adopt a declaration of intent
to reject the common position, or to amend or confirm the rejection of the common position
- ****III Codecision procedure (third reading)
simple majority to approve the joint text
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject the Council text

DA

DE

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FR

IT

NL

PT

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

1. Question by Ioannis Theonas (H-0573/94)

Subject: Deterioration in relations between Iraq and Kuwait

Public opinion is particularly anxious about the latest developments in the border region between Iraq and Kuwait and the mobilization of mainly US and UK troops following the threatening deployment of troops by Iraq and the statements by Mr Clinton. The risk of rekindling the war in the region and the constant presence of US-led international troops in more and more regions throughout the world threaten to totally undermine current international principles of respect for the independence and sovereignty of states and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of third countries.

Does the Council consider that these principles enshrined in the UN Charter continue to apply and should be strengthened 50 years after its foundation and that the UN should not be used to further the self-interests of its member states or to reduce people to a state of destitution, as in the case of the Iraqi people who have suffered more than one million deaths, 30% of whom were children, even though the embargo has proved to be ineffective as a means of exerting pressure on the Iraqi authorities?

13.10.1994

gr

2. Question by Jannis Sakellariou (H-0511/94)

Subject: Obstructions to entering northern Iraq at the Turkish border crossing of Habur

Is the Council aware that Turkey is, at least at times, refusing to allow foreign politicians, members of aid organizations and foreign journalists to enter northern Iraq via the (only) border crossing at Habur, despite the presentation of a valid Iraqi visa and written notice being given to the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Ankara?

If so, what is the Council's view on this matter?

Does the Council intend to take steps to persuade Turkey to permit the unhindered lawful crossing of the border at Habur?

23.09.1994

de

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

3. Question by Vassilis Ephremidis (H-0571/94)

Subject: The convening of a Balkan conference

On 29 September 1994 two members of the Troika, Mr Kinkel and Mr Juppé, wrote to the Greek Government proposing a meeting of the Troika to discuss the question of Greece's relations with its neighbours - Albania, Skopje and Turkey. The Greek Government agreed to this proposal.

Does the Council of Foreign Ministers not agree that, in view of the close interdependence of the Balkan countries and the dangers of war spreading throughout the Balkans, initiatives of this kind should form part of a wider perspective for safeguarding peace and security in the region, based on the principle of the inviolability of borders, full guarantees for the rights of minorities and the development of economic and technical cooperation among the Balkan states on the basis of equality and mutual benefit? Does it intend to review its detrimental policy towards this region and support the proposals for the convening of a conference of the countries and warring parties in the Balkans?

13.10.1994

gr

4. Question by Alexandros Alavanos (H-0532/94)

Subject: Turkish threats against a Member State of the European Union

High-ranking Turkish Government officials are constantly claiming that the extension of Greece's territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles, which is Greece's sovereign right under the International Law of the Sea, constitutes 'grounds for war'.

The 'threat of war' in international relations constitutes a flagrant violation of international rules.

What measures will the Council take to halt the constant threats to the sovereign rights of a Member State of the European Union?

06.10.1994

gr

5. Question by Niall Andrews (H-0567/94)

Subject: Common policy on refugees

What steps has the Council taken to develop a common European policy in order to allow a common response to requests for asylum by political refugees arriving in European Union countries?

13.10.1994

en

6. Question by Alex Smith (H-0545/94)

Subject: Budgetary deficits of Member States

What assessment has been made by the Council of the effect on the poorest people, the homeless, and unemployed within the European Union Member States of the demands by the Commission that Member States cut their budget deficits, and hence public investment programmes, to comply with the Masstricht Treaty terms on economic and monetary union?

12.10.1994

en

7. Question by Juan Izquierdo Collado (H-0548/94)

Subject: Positions of the IMF and the World Bank

Following the publication in the European press of statements by officials of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at their recent meeting in Madrid, what is the Council's view of their proposals for reducing social costs and allowing an unrestricted right to dismiss staff, at a time when both organizations envisage an upturn in economic growth?

13.10.1994

es

8. Question by Helena Torres Marques (H-0554/94)

Subject: Position of the various governments on the proposal to replace VAT legislation

One of the priorities of the German Presidency in the industrial field was to replace the existing VAT legislation with a harmonized system based on the principle of the country of origin and to introduce a Community tax on CO2 and energy.

Since this topic has been discussed in successive ECOFIN Councils, can the Council say which governments are in favour and which against each of these proposals by the Presidency?

13.10.1994

pt

9. Question by John Cushnahan (H-0552/94)

Subject: EU trade with Japan

Has the Council discussed the recent US/Japan trade agreement? Has the Council assessed the implications of this agreement for future European Union trade with Japan?

13.10.1994

en

10. Question by Gerard Collins (H-0561/94)

Subject: EU-ASEAN trade

In 1993 the volume of trade between the European Union and the ASEAN countries (Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) amounted to more than ECU 49 billion. Will the Council outline the measures it considers necessary to promote further trade development with the ASEAN countries which will also take into account the needs of the EU's peripheral Member States, including Ireland?

13.10.1994

en

11. Question by James Fitzsimons (H-0565/94)

Subject: Negotiations with Baltic States

Will the Council indicate what progress is being made in the negotiations with the Baltic States for the establishment of free trade areas?

13.10.1994

en

12. Question by Sir Jack Stewart-Clark (H-0531/94)

Subject: Multilateral extradition

One of the problems in bringing drug traffickers and other criminals to justice is the differing legal systems within the European Union. In particular, extradition continues to be a problem. Is this matter being addressed as a matter of urgency and what Council agreement can be achieved regarding multilateral extradition?

06.10.1994

en

13. Question by Mark Watts (H-0502/94)

Subject: Coordination of air/sea rescue services

What mechanisms exist between Member States to coordinate air/sea rescue services operating in the English Channel, the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the Western Approaches of the Atlantic Ocean?

21.09.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

14. Question by Sérgio Ribeiro (H-0499/94)

Subject: Discrimination by the Council

According to press reports released by such agencies as Reuters and the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', Mr Klaus Kinkel, President of the Council of Foreign Ministers, removed the names of two PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) local councillors from a list of guests invited to attend an official concert on the occasion of the Council meeting in Barsinghausen on Saturday 10 September because they had been elected as PDS candidates.

Does the Council not agree that this form of discrimination against representatives of a party which obtained nearly 20% of votes in the recent elections in the new Länder and is represented in the Bundestag is totally unjustifiable and unacceptable? What action does the Council intend to take to prevent this type of discrimination and similar threats to democracy in the Member States?

19.09.1994

pt

15. Question by Anne McIntosh (H-0506/94)

Subject: Rates of excise duty on alcohol

Having regard to the gross disparities in excise duties charged across the Member States in relation to beers, wines and spirits and recognizing the distortion to the Single European Market which these disparities cause, would the Council look favourably on an approximation of rates of excise duty throughout the 12 Member States?

Would the President-in-Office of the Council mandate the Commission to approximate rates of excise duty on beers, wines and spirits?

22.09.1994

en

16. Question by Anita Pollack (H-0509/94)

Subject: Transport of animals for slaughter

Is the Council aware of the petition containing two million signatures calling for a maximum 8-hour journey time which was submitted to the Agriculture Minister during the Luxembourg Presidency, and what is the Council's position on the current state of negotiations on transport of animals?

22.09.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

17. Question by Jens-Peter Bonde (H-0513/94)

Subject: Openness in the EU

Is the Council Decision of 20 December 1992 on openness binding on the Council, or is it possible to make exceptions?

Will the Council produce a summary of the formal votes taken, indicating how the various Member States voted?

Will the Council produce a similar summary of any informal votes taken, or majorities ascertained, stating which Member States voted against in these informal votes?

Will the Council allow a mere Member of Parliament to see its pleadings to the Court of Justice in the case brought by the Guardian, or will that Member have to content himself with being able to read extracts from the pleadings in various newspapers?

Will the Council justify its answers?

26.09.1994

da

18. Question by Richard Balfe (H-0525/94)

Subject: 1999/2000 Celebrations

The country currently holding the Presidency will also hold the Presidency for the second half of 1999, thereby giving it a unique opportunity to plan celebrations across the European Community in connection with the forthcoming Millennium.

Is the Council willing to enter into dialogue with the other institutions with a view to laying the ground for a truly imaginative celebration of this historic date? Does the Council also accept that many places in Europe would wish to celebrate, the foremost amongst them being the London Borough of Greenwich, on which the Greenwich Meridian Line is based?

03.10.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

19. Question by Mihail Papayannakis (H-0526/94)

Subject: Property of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania

The previous totalitarian regime in Albania confiscated the property of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania and of the other christian churches and other religions. The property confiscated included buildings (churches and monasteries, some of which are historically important), objects of veneration, archives, land and bank accounts. The present regime in Albania has legally annulled the confiscation of that property. In practice, however, the property in question has not yet been returned and is depreciating in value or rotting away in various warehouses.

Bearing in mind that such acts and omissions compromise Albania's position in the international community (Albania is a member of the CSCE), particularly from the point of view of respect for basic human rights and the basic rights of Albanian citizens, and that the European Union's relations with Albania are very rapidly developing into forms of ever closer cooperation and association, how will the Council raise with Albania the urgent questions of respect for human rights and the unhindered development and functioning of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and especially the return of historic relics and monasteries which, beyond their religious significance, have a wider European cultural value?

03.10.1994

gr

20. Question by Otto von Habsburg (H-0529/94)

Subject: Remuneration of EU mediators in former Yugoslavia

The Council's response to my question on this matter in September (H-0409/94)⁽¹⁾, not only said nothing but also can only be regarded as an insult to Parliament.

I therefore reiterate my question: What are the exact emoluments received by Lord Owen and Mr Stoltenberg? If the Council refuses to answer the question, can it say why, or is there anything that the Council wishes to hide from the general public? How is this compatible with a parliamentary democracy?

04.10.1994

de

⁽¹⁾ Annex to the verbatim report of proceedings of 28.9.1994.

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

21. Question by Jean Gol (H-0535/94)

Subject: Biofuels

Bioethanol costs much more than fossil fuels. The economic viability of fuel of plant origin is thus entirely dependent on the adoption by the European Council of the Scrivener proposal, which seeks to abolish taxes and duty on this type of fuel.

What progress has been made on this issue and what is the attitude of the future Member States of the Union to the matter?

06.10.1994

fr

22. Question by Caroline Jackson (H-0542/94)

Subject: Hazardous waste list (COM(94) 156 final)

Can the Council confirm that if it fails to adopt the draft decision establishing a list of hazardous waste (COM(94) 156 final) by 21 December 1994, the decision as proposed by the Commission will form the substantive list that will come into force throughout the Union, and can the Council explain the background to this situation?

12.10.1994

en

23. Question by Pat Gallagher (H-0555/94)

Subject: Cross-border payments

Does the Council intend to take action to alleviate the delays being experienced in processing cross-border payments at the Union's internal frontiers?

13.10.1994

en

24. Question by Liam Hyland (H-0557/94)

Subject: Rural depopulation

In view of the continuing population drift from rural to urban areas and the consequent threat to the economic and social fabric of Europe's rural areas, does the Council support a strengthening of the existing rural development policies in order to provide an effective response to the growing problem of rural depopulation?

13.10.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

25. Question by Mark Killilea (H-0559/94)

Subject: Free movement of farm animals in the internal market

As Ireland is the only country in the EU without a fixed link to Continental Europe, what steps has the Council taken to ensure that Irish exporters are allowed the same access to continental markets as that enjoyed by their competitors in the other Member States in the light of the unilateral action by some ferry companies to prohibit the transport of live farm animals?

13.10.1994

en

26. Question by Brian Crowley (H-0563/94)

Subject: Irish language and European Union publications

Since Irish is an official language in the Republic of Ireland, can the Council outline its programme for publishing official EU documentation in the Irish language? Does the Council agree that EU publications which are specifically directed to Ireland such as Structural Fund Community Support Frameworks and Operational Programmes, should be made available in the Irish language?

13.10.1994

en

27. Question by Christine Crawley (H-0402/94)

Subject: Release of Timorese prisoners

Would the Council urge direct pressure on Indonesia to withdraw all its troops from East Timor, to release all East Timorese prisoners including Xanana Gusmao, also to call upon the UN Secretary-General to include representatives of the East Timorese people in the peace process and to call for the supply of arms to Indonesia to be stopped?

19.07.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

28. Question by Alex Smith (H-0546/94)

Subject: UN Special Commission on Iraq

Has the Commission received a copy of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq report (UNSCOM) on the control and monitoring of Iraq's programme of weapons of mass destruction, issued in October 1994? What assistance was given by the Commission in compiling information on EU-based supplies of military or dual-use equipment to Iraq?

12.10.1994

en

29. Question by John McCartin (H-0498/94)

Subject: Citizenship of the European Union

Does the Commission propose to introduce legislation governing the procedures by which non-Union citizens are admitted to citizenship of the Union and does it believe that such a regulation is necessary following the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty which provides for common European citizenship?

19.09.1994

en

30. Question by Ian White (H-0541/94)

Subject: World Bank and IMF

What concrete steps has the Commission taken to influence not only some aspects of structural adjustment programmes promoted by the World Bank and the IMF, but completely to overhaul the entire process so that any such programmes:

- benefit rather than harm the poor;
- support developing countries' own priorities and strategies such as rural development, food security and the reduction of the debt burden;
- recognize countries' rights to determine the direction of their development strategies and the pace of reform;
- take account of the national and international context?

11.10.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

31. Question by Juan Izquierdo Collado (H-0549/94)

Subject: Positions of the IMF and the World Bank

Following the publication in the European press of statements by officials of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at their recent meeting in Madrid, what is the Commission's view of their proposals for reducing social costs and allowing an unrestricted right to dismiss staff, at a time when both organizations envisage an upturn in economic growth?

13.10.1994

es

32. Question by Fausto Bertinotti (H-0522/94)

Subject: Television monopoly in Italy

Extending the control he already exercises over his three privately owned Fininvest television networks, the Italian Prime Minister has encompassed the RAI public service channels within his sphere of influence by appointing trusted associates or employees or members of Fininvest or Forza Italia to senior management positions in RAI. Does not the Commission believe that such actions constitute abuse of a dominant position, are tantamount to creating an out-and-out monopoly contrary to Community laws on competition and the free market, and manifestly transgress pluralism as regards information and the democratic rights of individuals? What steps will it take as a matter of urgency in order to counteract this disturbing state of affairs?

28.09.1994

it

33. Question by Pierluigi Castagnetti (H-0524/94)

Subject: Situation of the media in Italy

Does the Commission not consider that the crisis situation which has arisen in the Italian radio and television industry as a result of the monopolistic control of the commanding heights of the sector by a large economic group itself closely linked to the executive branch of power, and of the subordination of the national radio and television stations to that same power, is incompatible with both the Community's principles of freedom of competition and the fundamental rights of the citizen?

What specific initiatives does the Commission intend to take to control the phenomenon of media concentration in the European Union and to ensure that its citizens can exercise their right to receive free and pluralist information?

29.09.1994

it

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

34. Question by Carlo Ripa di Meana (H-0537/94)

Subject: Media concentration in Italy

The public and private television and radio broadcasting system in Italy is subject to a de facto monopoly by the Fininvest group which is still owned by the Italian Prime Minister. Fininvest also has shares in television channels in Spain and Germany.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to rectify this serious anomaly in Italy, which also concerns and affects the European Union Member States as a whole?

10.10.1994

it

35. Question by Roberto Barzanti (H-0544/94/rev. 1)

Subject: Media concentration

Does the Commission intend to consider the implications, at European level, of the abnormal dominant position in the Italian media of the Fininvest group, a situation which is aggravated by the fact that the group is owned by Prime Minister Berlusconi, who will be required to take part in European Union decisions relating to matters, policy options and acts which will be unavoidably linked to his personal interests?

12.10.1994

it

36. Question by Anne Van Lancker (H-0550/94)

Subject: Media concentration and diversity of the press

Apparently the Commission does not for the time being intend to propose any legislation on media concentration and diversity of the press.

Given that the media tycoons' lobby either will be or already is directly represented, is there nonetheless sufficient political will within the Commission and Council to establish a genuine internal market, and in so doing to protect diversity, and to adopt adequate legislation for this purpose? If so, what is the new timetable and who is to be consulted this time?

13.10.1994

nl

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

37. Question by Carmen Fraga Estevez (H-0519/94)

Subject: Indica rice

Over the last six years, the European Union has been commending the policy of converting rice production to the indica variety; however, the application of the GATT agreements is going to bring about a massive increase in imports of rice of this type from third countries, thoroughly jeopardizing the survival of this crop within the Community.

Will the Commission state what measures it intends to take to support this crop and guarantee that it will not disappear within the European Union?

28.09.1994

es

38. Question by Carole Tongue (H-0569/94)

Subject: Blair House II Agreement

With reference to the Blair House II provisions of the GATT Uruguay Round agreement on imports of packed, milled rice into the EU, why did the Commission sign an agreement that will, it is feared, potentially lead to the destruction of the European rice industry and in particular the Basmati rice milling sector? Will the Commission reassure Parliament that no jobs or investment will be lost when interpreting and implementing the agreement?

13.10.1994

en

39. Question by Joaquín Sisó Cruellas (H-0504/94)

Subject: Fight against fraud

Since it is essential to protect the European Union's financial interests if the Union is to operate properly, a key aspect of the fight against fraud is the need for a legal instrument establishing the legal conditions for the harmonization of criminal law in the various Member States.

What should be the salient features of the future 'crime of fraud against the Community' and when, in the Commission's opinion, will such a legal instrument actually come into being?

21.09.1994

es

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

40. Question by Miguel Arias Cañete (H-0517/94)

Subject: Fisheries agreement with Morocco

In view of the recent meetings held in Rabat with a view to a technical revision of the fisheries agreement with Morocco, and of that country's announcement of its decision substantially to reduce the fishing effort contained in the agreement, which needs to be upheld in its entirety if over 700 Community vessels are to be able to continue operating, can the Commission state what stage the negotiations have really reached and what attitude it intends to adopt so as to guarantee the future of the fleet which operates in the Moroccan fishing grounds?

28.09.1994

es

41. Question by Gianfranco Dell'Alba (H-0516/94)

Subject: Nuclear power station at Krsko, Slovenia

Is the Commission aware that the Slovenian nuclear power station at Krsko near the Croatian border has been in service for some 15 years without any proper underground bunkers for storing radioactive waste and that the plant has broken down several times and had to stop production, sometimes for long periods? What measures has the Commission taken or does it intend to take to check the safety of this plant and - if necessary - to ensure that it is closed down as quickly as possible? Was the question of adjustment to Community safety standards raised during negotiations on the accession of Slovenia to the EU, and if so in what terms?

28.09.1994

it

42. Question by Glyn Ford (H-0505/94)

Subject: Selection process in ERDF bids

With reference to the latest round of ERDF funding, and particularly the URBAN programme, does the Commission issue guidelines for selection criteria for Member State civil servants to prioritize bids for submission to the Commission?

Will the Commission comment on the lack of consultation with all bidders, as opposed to solely the successful bidders, in view of the apparent lack of transparency of this decision-making process?

22.09.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

43. Question by Antoinette Spaak (H-0534/94)

Subject: URBAN Community initiative

Which of the projects formulated by the Belgian local authorities does the Commission intend to adopt within the framework of the URBAN Community initiative?

06.10.1994

fr

44. Question by Jean Gol (H-0497/94)

Subject: Cooperation Agreement with Vietnam

Are negotiations under way with Vietnam with a view to concluding a cooperation agreement?

If so, will the Commission state what progress has been made with them?

19.09.1994

fr

45. Question by Konstantinos Hatzidakis (H-0500/94)

Subject: Establishment of CEDEFOP at Thessaloniki

The declaration accompanying the decision taken by common agreement between the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting at Head of State and Government level on the location of the seats of certain bodies and departments of the European Communities, which forms part of the conclusions of the European Council held in Brussels on 29 October 1993, call on the Institutions to provide that Thessaloniki be designated as soon as possible as the seat of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. On 16-17 May 1994, the Council of Foreign Ministers did in fact designate Thessaloniki as the seat of the Centre (decision published in OJ L 127, 19 May 1994).

One year on from the original decision taken by the Brussels European Council, what steps has the Commission taken to enable the centre to be set up and start operating as soon as possible in Thessaloniki? What stage has been reached exactly in setting up the facilities and what is the precise timetable for the gradual opening and full operation of the Centre in its new seat?

19.09.1994

gr

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

46. Question by Bryan Cassidy (H-0501/94)

Subject: Privatization in Russia

It is generally known that the Russian military industrial complex was endowed with the best technologies and managerial competence among Russian enterprises and that Russian farming needs a massive improvement in expertise in order to improve yields. In satisfying the European Union's criteria for conditionality, what progress can the Commission report on privatization in the military and agricultural sectors since the start-up of the TACIS programme?

20.09.1994

en

47. Question by David Morris (H-0503/94)

Subject: Accidents linked to British Rail 125 train doors

There is growing concern regarding the number of accidents involving British Rail 125 train doors.

According to Reports, there have been 350 'door deaths' and an estimated 500 injuries from '125' door opening incidents and although a Health and Safety Report last year recommended BR to 'ameliorate' the problem, their recommendation has still not been acted upon. Will the Commission urge the British Government to hold a public inquiry into these accidents and investigate whether either the European Consumer Safety Directive 85/374/EEC⁽¹⁾ and/or Product Safety Directive 92/59/EEC⁽²⁾ have been infringed in respect of door safety?

21.09.1994

en

48. Question by Stephen Hughes (H-0508/94)

Subject: Consolidation in the area of health and safety legislation

The White Paper on Social Policy states that the Commission would like to see a period of 'consolidation' in the area of health and safety legislation. What is meant by consolidation and what positive actions will this involve the Commission pursuing?

22.09.1994

en

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 210 of 7 August 1985, p. 29

⁽²⁾ OJ L 228 of 11 August 1992, p. 24

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

49. Question by Robert Sturdy (H-0510/94)

Subject: Nitrates in vegetables

In its proposals to introduce a maximum permissible limit for the level of nitrates in vegetables, has the Commission taken fully into consideration the views of such eminent scientists as Sir Richard Doll and Professor Walker that there is no justification for such controls and that the businesses of many growers in Northern Europe would be put into jeopardy if they were introduced?

22.09.1994

en

50. Question by Philippe De Coene (H-0512/94)

Subject: Directive of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (91/676/EEC)

Bearing in mind that net precipitation in Flanders is positive, is the uptake of crops an adequate reason to permit the application of larger amounts of nitrogen from livestock manure than the 210 and 170 kg N specified in Annex III, 2(b) of the Directive, also bearing in mind that this nitrogenous manure may, within limits, be supplemented with mineral and other fertilizer ⁽¹⁾? Is the harvesting of two crops in a single growing season an adequate reason to increase the permitted quantities of nitrogen from livestock manure by 25%, thereby arriving at a fertilizer dose exceeding 210 and 170 kg N from livestock manure per hectare per annum? Is it true that the whole of the Netherlands has been designated as a vulnerable zone, and would the Commission accept designation of only limited parts of Belgian territory as vulnerable?

23.09.1994

nl

51. Question by Friedrich Wolf (H-0514/94)

Subject: Violation of Article 92 by the Berlin Senate

Taking into account its recent ruling on the sale of property located on the Potsdamerplatz by the Land Berlin to Mercedes Benz, is the Commission aware of the fact that after the Commission concluded that this property deal was not a breach of Article 92, the Berlin Senate is now suddenly proposing to redraft legislation on the compulsory construction of parking places in such a way that Mercedes Benz will gain DM 300 million?

Will the Commission investigate this form of illegal state aid in line with Article 92 and 93 of the Treaty and inform Parliament on the outcome of proceedings?

27.09.1994

de

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

52. Question by Leen van der Waal (H-0515/94)

Subject: The merging of different committees on shipping to form the CoSS

According to Council document MAR - 93/9 the Commission intends to merge a number of different committees provided for in directives concerning shipping (such as those on port-state control and segregated ballast tanks) into a single committee, the Committee on Safe Seas (CoSS), whose remit would be that of the committee provided for in Directive 93/75/EEC⁽¹⁾.

Can the Commission confirm this, and if so, can it indicate which committees are to be merged to form the CoSS and say whether the CoSS will also have responsibilities as regards the formulation of policies.

27.09.1994

nl

53. Question by Luis Campoy Zueco (H-0518/94)

Subject: Organization of the common market in fruit and vegetables

Within the framework of the reform of the common market in fruit and vegetables, does the Commission, given the regional significance of products such as asparagus in Spain, intend to include fresh asparagus in the list of totally protected products which appears in Regulation 1035/72⁽²⁾ and/or to grant assistance for industrializing this product?

28.09.1994

es

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 247. 5.10.1993, p. 19.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 118, 20.5.72, p. 1

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

54. Question by Edith Müller (H-0521/94)

Subject: 'EU millions wasted in Poland'

'Former privatization minister Janusz Lewandowski and an MP from the opposition Free Union party made public on Wednesday in Warsaw that EU financial aid has been mismanaged, after no satisfactory answer was given to questions put to the minister responsible, Wieslaw Kaczmarek, member of the ruling Left Coalition. The questions concern the fate of ECU 10 million granted by the EU to Poland as non-repayable aid intended to promote Poland's industrial base and attract foreign capital. It now appears that nothing has been done with it for nine months. This could lead to the aid being withdrawn, with considerable loss of prestige for Poland. Cumbersome administrative procedures were given as the cause of the delay.'

Is the above report in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 22 September 1994 accurate, what is the current situation regarding payment of these funds, and have any problems arisen?

28.09.1994

de

55. Question by Christine Crawley (H-0523/94)

Subject: Grant to Horizon Poultry Farm

Would the Commission insist, if the decision regarding the grant to Horizon Poultry Farm, given after such opprobrium, is final, that the grant not be awarded until the Commission has come forward with proposals to amend the battery hens directive and set new standards for alternative systems, whereby the best possible welfare standards are ensured for laying hens?

29.09.1994

en

56. Question by Joan Vallvé (H-0527/94)

Subject: Forest fires in the Mediterranean area

Forest fires are frequent occurrences in the Mediterranean Member States, causing considerable economic and ecological damage throughout that area. The summer of 1994 saw particularly severe fires in Catalonia, affecting over 60 000 ha.

Does the Commission not consider it necessary to undertake research and analysis concerning these fires, and to propose measures for dealing with such fires to the competent authorities of the Member States?

Could the Commission not propose an exchange of views between Member States concerning means of combating forest fires in the Mediterranean area?

03.10.1994

es

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

57. Question by Thomas Megahy (H-0528/94)

Subject: Draft directive on buses and coaches: consultations with disabled people

What consultations have been held with disabled people and their organizations regarding the draft directive on buses and coaches?

04.10.1994

en

58. Question by Concepció Ferrer (H-0530/94)

Subject: Crisis in the Community's hazelnut sector

The hazelnut sector is facing a crisis with the upcoming world harvest of hazelnuts, which in Turkey alone is expected to reach 550 000 to 600 000 tonnes.

Given that total world consumption is between 500 000 and 550 000 tonnes, it is to be expected that the price of this product will fall sharply as a result of over-supply.

In the light of the resolution on the hazelnut market in the Community adopted by Parliament on 11 February 1994, can the Commission say what measures it has adopted or intends to adopt to deal with this drop in prices, which may have serious consequences for the Community's hazelnut sector?

04.10.1994

es

59. Question by Jean-Pierre Raffarin (H-0536/94)

Subject: Planned TGV line Paris-Angoulême-Bordeaux-Spain

What is the Commission's position as regards the TGV line planned by the French national network for the Paris-Angoulême-Bordeaux-Spain route?

Is it a priority route within the European network and, if so, what is the position of the European Union?

06.10.1994

fr

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

60. Question by Alexandros Alavanos (H-0538/94)

Subject: Television advertising in Greece and infringement of Directive 89/552/EEC

In its reply to my question no. H-1222/93, the Commission referred only to the problems of transposing Directive 89/552⁽¹⁾ into Greek law. In view of the fact that the provisions on advertising, and particularly Articles 10 and 11, of Directive 89/552/EEC continue to be infringed and increasingly frequently, what checks has the Commission carried out on the implementation by Greece of the Articles relating to advertising; what stage has been reached in Greece's compliance with the provisions of this directive; what measures will it take to implement Articles 10 and 11; which body has been appointed to monitor implementation of the directive in Greece and what options are open to the Commission to intervene where the common rules on television advertising have been breached?

10.10.1994
gr

61. Question by Mihail Papayannakis (H-0539/94)

Subject: Pollution of the Pagasitic Gulf

The Pagasitic Gulf is one of the most important coastal ecosystems in Greece; it is polluted by phytoplankton, phosphates, heavy metals, nitrates and hydro-carbons caused by pesticides, urban waste and discharges from ships etc, thus breaching a number of directives (eg 76/464/EEC⁽²⁾, 83/513/EEC⁽³⁾, 84/491/EEC⁽⁴⁾). A court case is also pending in connection with the pollution.

In view of this, has the Commission initiated the procedure under Article 169 against the responsible Greek authorities and what stage has been reached with the measures it has taken?

10.10.1994
gr

⁽¹⁾ OJ No. L 298, 17.10.1989, p. 23

⁽²⁾ OJ L 129, 18.5.1976, p. 23

⁽³⁾ OJ L 291, 24.10.1983, p. 1

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 274, 17.10.1984, p. 11

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

62. Question by Caroline Jackson (H-0543/94)

Subject: Language restriction in Brussels press briefings

The London 'Daily Telegraph' reported on 8 October that 'the European Commission has ruled that French must remain the official language of communication to the press'. Is this true, and if so, why it has been decided to depart from Commission internal practice, if the net result may be that press understanding of EU policies and explanations diminishes?

12.10.1994

en

63. Question by Simon Murphy (H-0547/94)

Subject: Consumer protection and firework safety

Will the Commission confirm that, in the light of the fears expressed by many fire services, Trading Standards Officers and consumer groups in the United Kingdom, and taking into account Article 100a(3) of the Maastricht Treaty, a Member State government may ban from public sale any firework considered to be too powerful, too unpredictable or too dangerous?

12.10.1994

en

64. Question by Clive Needle (H-0551/94)

Subject: ESF payments in Norfolk

What steps are being taken to ensure prompt and effective use of ESF payments in Norfolk in 1995, having regard to the delays experienced this year?

13.10.1994

en

65. Question by John Cushnahan (H-0553/94)

Subject: Investment in Shannon airport

The Community Support Framework for Ireland (1994-1999) contains a commitment to invest structural funding in upgrading the facilities at Shannon airport. Does the Commission agree that these improvements are vitally important for the development of the Mid-West region?

Has the Commission received from the Irish authorities an indication of when the cost-benefit analysis in respect of this project will be submitted? Will the Commission undertake to deal with the approval process quickly so as to avoid any delays in the project?

13.10.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

66. Question by Pat Gallagher (H-0556/94)

Subject: Atlantic coastal regions

As the Commission is aware, increasing attention is being paid to the various problems faced by Atlantic coastal regions.

Will the Commission set out its plans to assist in developing the economies of the Atlantic coastal regions and islands on the periphery of the European Union?

13.10.1994

en

67. Question by Liam Hyland (H-0558/94)

Subject: Forestry and the environment

In view of the fact that increased amounts of land are lying idle due to factors such as set-aside in rural areas and the existence of disused and derelict sites in urban areas, does the Commission accept that a programme of tree-planting in these areas would improve both the urban and rural environment and what action, if any, does it propose to take in this area?

13.10.1994

en

68. Question by Mark Killilea (H-0560/94)

Subject: Cheaper travel for young people

While the Council of Europe has stepped in to ensure that young people in Europe can continue to avail of an Inter-rail card which will help to ensure youth mobility in Europe, and to help young people from countries with backward economies, high unemployment or who are from marginalized groups, does the Commission agree that the European Union should itself be playing a lead role in making all forms of transport more accessible to young people?

13.10.1994

en

69. Question by Gerard Collins (H-0562/94)

Subject: Disadvantaged areas in Ireland

Can the Commission explain its reasons for the long delay in reaching a decision on the extension of the Disadvantaged Areas in Ireland and will it now indicate when it proposes to conclude its examination of the proposals for the extension and reclassification of these areas?

13.10.1994

en

70. Question by Brian Crowley (H-0564/94)

Subject: Ireland's Gaeltacht areas and the structural funds

What, if any, specific measures does the Commission to undertake in the context of the Structural Funds Community Support Framework for Ireland in order to encourage increased economic activity and new job opportunities in the Gaeltacht areas of Ireland?

13.10.1994

en

71. Question by James Fitzsimons (H-0566/94)

Subject: Free travel for the elderly

Since there are special provisions in many Member States to provide free travel (or at reduced cost) for the elderly, would the Commission be prepared to bring forward proposals to encourage the extension of these schemes to all parts of the Union?

13.10.1994

en

72. Question by Niall Andrews (H-0568/94)

Subject: NOW programme

Will the Commission give a firm commitment that it will reach an early decision on the operational programmes to be submitted by the Member States concerned under the Community Initiative on Employment and Development of Human Resources which includes funding for a new NOW programme aimed at providing equal employment opportunities for women, and will it ensure that funding under this Initiative will not discriminate against women?

13.10.1994

en

73. Question by Raphaël Chanterie (H-0570/94)

Subject: Operation of the ESF - Objectives 3 and 4

The European Social Fund makes a valuable contribution to the fight against unemployment.

In this connection, would the Commission provide details of the state of implementation by the Member States of the new objectives 3 and 4 of the structural funds?

More particularly, why have the programmes presented a year ago by the Flemish Government still not received final approval?

13.10.1994

nl

74. Question by Vassilis Ephremidis (H-0572/94)

Subject: Boosting Community production of and stimulating demand for vinicultural products

Instead of resolving the imbalance created on the vinicultural market, the Commission's recent proposals to reform the market involve further drastic reductions in production, thereby endangering the future of European vinicultural production. In addition, the GATT Agreement and the EU's preferential agreements with third countries, which do not have restrictions on their production, are exacerbating the existing problems. The farmers' trade unions have categorically rejected this proposal.

Does the Commission not think that there is a need to approach this issue with a view to boosting Community production - given the economic and social significance of this traditional product in certain regions of the EU - stimulating demand - comprising a radical revision of the system of indirect consumer taxes which are a considerable burden on wine and ultimately work in favour of non-Community, competitive products - promoting and protecting natural wine by specifying a high minimum content of ethyl alcohol before any enrichment and, if so, will the Commission consider withdrawing its proposal and drafting a new proposal to promote the above measures?

13.10.1994

gr

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

75. Question by Ioannis Theonas (H-0574/94)

Subject: The deterioration in the standard of living of the elderly

Senior citizens' organizations have staged mass demonstrations in response to the new measures which the Greek Government is being required to take in order to implement the guidelines decided on at the Corfu Summit, the Maastricht Treaty and the Council's recommendations on reducing deficits with the aim of reducing social security spending. These measures will lead to a drop in the standard of living of elderly people.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to safeguard the purchasing power of the elderly in Greece and the other Member States to ensure that it covers their needs, guarantees them a decent standard of living as well as access to healthcare and social welfare and enables them to participate fully in society, thereby ensuring that, a year after the European Year of the Elderly, pensioners have not been forgotten once more?

13.10.1994

gr

76. Question by Anne McIntosh (H-0426/94)

Subject: Set-aside rules

Does the Commission agree that there should be a level playing field and uniform rules in defining set-aside land and which crops, grown on set-aside land, can qualify for the premium?

Is the Commission aware, for example, of the confusion over whether borage qualifies for the set-aside premium when grown on set-aside land?

29.07.1994

en

77. Question by Richard Balfe (H-0439/94)

Subject: Seat belts

Is the Commission prepared to investigate the possibility of introducing legislation to make the fitting of seat belts on coaches and school buses used within the European Community compulsory?

04.08.1994

en

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

78. Question by Lyndon Harrison (H-0453/94)

Subject: Discriminatory taxation of motor vehicles in Italy

Will the Commission state what steps are being taken to ensure the abolition of the Italian 'imposta straordinaria' tax on motor cars of over 2 litre engine capacity which, by discriminating against vehicles manufactured in other Member States, must contravene Article 95 of the Single European Act by being a barrier to free trade.

07.09.1994

en

79. Question by Sir Jack Stewart-Clark (H-0465/94)

Subject: Information on additives in pharmaceutical products

A significant number of people are sensitive to various food additives, particularly azo dyes which are frequently used for colouring foods and pharmaceutical products. The EU legislation requires food manufacturers to state the additives to their products, but the anomaly is that there is no such requirement for the pharmaceutical industry. Doctors prescribing medicines to patients known to have acute sensitivities can only find out what additives there are by writing to the given pharmaceutical firm. Yet they will be held responsible if the patient has a sensitivity reaction to the medicine prescribed.

Has the Commission any intention to deal with this problem in the foreseeable future?

12.09.1994

en

80. Question by Petrus Cornelissen (H-0467/94)

Subject: Transport of animals

A recent investigation by the Netherlands National Animal Protection Inspectorate has revealed that thousands of horses are being transported from Eastern Europe to mainly Italian abattoirs under unimaginable conditions. The horses are packed together in overloaded lorries for days, subjected to extreme temperatures and kept without water, food or rest. They are sometimes trampled to death or deliberately mutilated to reduce their value on import.

What specific measures will the Commission take? Is it prepared to make vigorous efforts to tighten the provisions of Directive 91/628/EEC⁽¹⁾ accordingly and ensure strict compliance, and will it make the issue of licences for import into the EU subject to the same requirements imposed on the transport of these animals from the European Union?

12.09.1994

nl

⁽¹⁾OJ No. L 340, 11.12.1991, p. 17