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ORAL QUESTIONS

pursuant to Rule 44 of the Rules of Procedure

for QUESTION TIME

on 27 March 1984

PE 88.750

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

1. Question by Mrs GAIOTTI DE BIASE (H-16/84)* (xx)

Subject: Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture during the first half of 1984

At the informal meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the Member States of the European Community at Athens on 28 November 1983, it was agreed to proceed with meetings between Ministers of Culture, either within the context of the Council or at the level of representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting in Council.

The French Minister of Culture, who will be President-in-Office of the Council for the first half of 1984, is reported to have agreed to call a ministerial meeting during the first half of 1984.

In the light of the above, the French Presidency is asked to reply to the following questions:

1. Does the French Presidency envisage, for the first half of 1984, a formal meeting of the Council or of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting in Council with a view to discussing culture-related topics?
2. Will such meetings take place regularly every year?
3. In the light of the deliberations at Athens on 28 November 1983, what topics does the French Presidency intend to include on the agenda of the meeting envisaged for the first half of 1984?
4. Will, therefore, the European Parliament, and its Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport in particular, be kept informed of the preparations for, and the results of, such meetings?

13.12.1983

(*) Former oral question with debate (O-123/83), converted into a question for question time.

(xx) First position subject to President's agreement

2. Question by Mr COUSTE (H-397/83) (x)

Subject: Milk production quotas and the CAP

Does the Council consider that milk production quotas would be a blow struck against the CAP?

23.09.1983

3. Question by Mr ESTGEN (H-658/83) (x)

Subject: Memorandum from the Luxembourg Government

What arrangements has the Presidency made for the consideration of the memorandum which the President of the Luxembourg Government submitted to the members of the European Council in Athens on 6 December 1983?

23.01.84

4. Question by Mr MARSHALL (H-669/83) (x)

Subject : Unit Trusts

Could the Council state what developments there have been since it replied to my question on this subject in December 1981 ?

25.01.1984

(x) Priority by reason of being carried over from preceding Question Time pursuant to the President's decision of 14.12.76

5. Question by Mr von WOGAU (H-670/83) (x)

Subject : Council meetings on the internal market

It has been reported that, following the successful Council meetings on the internal market held in 1983, there are no plans to hold any further Council meetings entirely devoted to this difficult subject, which is crucial to European integration.

When does the Council intend to hold its next meeting devoted, like the Council meeting of 26 November 1983, entirely to the special problems of the internal market?

25.01.1984

6. Question by Mr NYBORG (H-676/83) (x)

Subject: The Council's willingness to adopt decisions with a view to the creation of the internal Community market

Last year both the West German and Greek Presidencies organized several meetings of the Ministers responsible for the common internal market.

What Council meetings of this nature are planned for the first half of 1984?

30.1.84

7. Question by Mrs LIZIN (H-689/83) (x)

Subject: Appointment of the Belgian judge to the Court of Justice

Can the Council say why the appointment of the Belgian judge to the Court of Justice has not yet been made and what reasons there are for this delay?

31.1.84

(x) Priority by reason of being carried over from preceding Question
Time pursuant to the President's decision of 14.12.76

8. Question by Mr ROGALLA (H-321/83)

Subject: Personal checks at internal Community frontiers

What is the Council's view of the Member States' contention that a number of arrests in sensitive areas (e.g. internal security, drugs, immigration policy, weapons, etc.) argues against the gradual abolition of personal checks at internal Community frontiers? Does the Council have statistics from the Member States, or its own data, which can be tested and weighed, for example, against the requisite manpower costs in each case and what are the results of such enquiries in comparison with data from the USA or the Nordic Passport Union?

9.8.1983

9. Question by Mr VAN MINNEN (H-570/83)

Subject: Reduction of personal checks at frontiers

How does the Council regard the noticeable increase in personal checks at the Dutch-Belgian frontier, which clearly conflicts with Council decisions aimed at reducing checks in connexion with the introduction of the European passport?

5.12.1983

10. Question by Mr HUTTON (H-588/83)

Subject: Representation of the Council in Parliament

In view of the need for closer relations with the Council and of Parliament's heavy work-load until May 1984, will the Council now agree to be represented at ministerial level on an additional day during each part-session?

12.12.1983

11. Question by Mr LALOR (H-612/83)

Subject : Agreement on new regional fund

Will the Council indicate fully why it has been unable to reach a decision on the adoption of a new Regional Fund Regulation (1) which is of vital importance to the regions most in need of aid, particularly since discussions have been proceeding now for more than a year and will it give the European Parliament a firm commitment to carry out its responsibilities in this regard ?

(1) Oral question No. H-323/83 Revised reply SN 2422/83

22.12.1983

12. Question by Sir James SCOTT-HOPKINS (H-655/83)

Subject : USA imposition on stainless steel

Would the Council of Ministers state what progress has been made in recent talks between representatives of the EC and the USA regarding the USA's imposition of restrictions on the importing of special and stainless steels from the Community ?

19.01.1984

13. Question by Mrs VAN HEMELDONCK (H-781/83)*

Subject: Supervision and control of the transfrontier shipment of hazardous wastes within the European Community

Can the Council say whether there is any truth in reports that it is under pressure from a group of large insurance companies to prevent the above Regulation on the transfrontier shipment of toxic and hazardous wastes from including provisions to the effect that liability lies with the producers?

27.1.1984

* Former oral question without debate (O-152/83), converted into a question for question time

14. Question by Mrs HAMMERICH (H-710/83)

Subject: A European Space Community

On Wednesday, 8 February 1984, the newspaper 'Information' quoted a report by the press agency AFP stating that the President of the Council, while on his tour of the Community's capitals at the start of his presidency, has been calling for the creation of a 'European Space Community'. There would be a manned 'European space station' to monitor, provide warning of and counter 'any threat', and this would represent a 'great step towards self-reliance in defence'.

Defence matters are expressly excluded from the responsibilities of the Community's institutions.

How does the French Presidency propose to establish a European Space Community able to send up a space station to strengthen European defence? What article in the Treaty of Rome entitles the President of the Council of the European Communities to put forward such proposals? And how does the President think he can persuade his colleagues on the Council - including the Danish Prime Minister - to accept such plans?

13.2.1984

15. Question by Mr VANDEWIELE (H-740/83)

Subject : Construction of a permanent cross-Channel Link

What are the Council's intentions with regard to the construction of a permanent cross-Channel link, for which it allocated an appropriation of 500,000 ECU out of the Community budget in December 1982 for a financial feasibility study?

16.02.1984

16. Question by Mrs SCHLEICHER (H-744/83)

Subject : The so-called 'directives to restrict the use of asbestos'

On 23 April 1982 the European Parliament gave its opinion on the Commission proposal for a directive on the use of asbestos. The Commission's original proposal laid down rules for the use of blue and white asbestos.

Going on from this, the European Parliament, acting on my proposal as rapporteur, called by a large majority for an unambiguous symbol to be put on all products containing asbestos. The Commission took up this call in an amended proposal for a directive.

The Council of Ministers was not able to reach agreement on this proposal as a whole.

The Official Journal of the European Communities of 29 September 1983 contained a 'skeleton directive' making it obligatory for all asbestos products to be identified by a symbol and including the rules governing blue asbestos. There are still no rules for the use of white asbestos, despite the fact that the European Parliament has also made very specific proposals on them.

What is the present state of progress in the Council's deliberations, when is a regulation likely to be adopted, and how will the European Parliament's recommendations be taken into consideration in the deliberations in the Council of Ministers?

16.02.1984

17. Question by Mr PAPANTONIOU (H-749/83)

Subject : Issuing of an order by the Council to the Commission to begin negotiations on the establishment of an EEC-Cyprus customs union

Although the forthcoming visit to Cyprus by a Commission delegation for an exchange of views with the Cyprus Government on the EEC-Cyprus customs union is an encouraging sign, the fact remains that the Community has not fulfilled the treaty obligation it undertook in this matter (Association Agreement, Article 2(3) and Council Decision on Association of 24.11.1980, paragraph 3). Since Cyprus's exports to the Community represent very small quantities and sums compared to the Community's overall imports of such products, and have no effect on Community production, either because they relate to products of which there is a shortage in the Community (e.g. citrus fruit) or because of the season of the year in which they are carried out (e.g. early potatoes, table grapes), can the Council say when the exploratory talks will be completed and when it will issue an order to the Commission so that negotiations on the establishment of a customs union can at last begin?

16.2.1984

18. Question by Ms QUIN (H-727/83)

Subject: The shipbuilding industry in the EEC

When did the Council last discuss shipbuilding and what were the results of its discussions?

17.2.1984

19. Question by Mrs LE ROUX (H-733/83)

Subject: Consultation of the European Parliament

In accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EEC) No. 858/81, the Council is currently considering the operation of the import arrangements for New Zealand butter for the period 1984-1988 on the basis of a proposal from the Commission.

Although the Council's discussions have already been in progress for more than three months, the European Parliament has still not been consulted. Is the Council ever going to consult the European Parliament on this important issue?

17.2.1984

20. Question by Mr WURTZ (H-734/83)

Subject: American offensive in the agricultural markets

In its answer to my Oral Question (H-361/83)¹, the Council declared its willingness to continue its action by examining all possible avenues open to it, particularly as regards the subsidized sales of dairy products to Egypt.

Can the Council say what measures have been taken to curb this American offensive and what results have been obtained?

17.2.1984

¹ Debates, OJ No. 1-304

21. Question by Mr MAFFRE-BAUGE (H-735/83)

Subject: Taxation of wine

On 12 July 1983, the Court of Justice handed down a judgement (Case 170/78) finding the United Kingdom guilty of a breach of the Treaty establishing the EEC and noting in particular that: 'the effect of the United Kingdom tax system is to stamp wine with the hallmarks of a luxury product, which, in view of the tax burden which it bears, can scarcely constitute in the eyes of the consumer a genuine alternative to the typical domestically produced beverage'.

Does the Council intend to take account of this judgement by harmonizing the excise duties on alcohol, particularly those on wine and beer?

17.2.1984

22. Question by Mrs POIRIER (H-736/83)

Subject: Import of cereals substitutes

The Commission has finally proposed to the Council that consultations and negotiations be opened within GATT with a view to stabilizing imports of the by-products of the maize industry, in particular corn gluten feed.

Does the Council intend to empower the Commission to request the complete and definitive unbinding of the duty-free rating currently applied?

17.2.1984

23. Question by Mr KALOYANNIS (H-753/83)

Subject : ERDF (non-quota section) assistance for the Greek economy

Can the Council state whether the reason why the Greek textile industry, the ready-made clothing industry and the iron and steel industry are ineligible for assistance from the Community's Regional Development Fund (non-quota section) to help cope with the consequences of Community enlargement - assistance estimated to be of the order of two thousand million drachmas - is that the relevant data requested by the Commission as of November 1982 were not submitted in time by the Greek Government? If this in fact was the case, is there still some way, and time, to rectify this error, so that this blow need not be sustained by the disadvantaged Greek economy and the blameless Greek people?

20.02.1984

24. Question by Mr PAPAEFSTRATIOU (H-756/83)

Subject : Measures and guarantees to ensure equality and impartiality during the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament

In view of the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament in June 1984, what steps does the Council propose to take to ensure that in the various Member States there is equality and impartiality in the handling of government and opposition political parties by the State information media (television and radio) with regard to unrestricted communication with the people, and to give full guarantees as regards the conduct of the voting to citizens of EEC Member States who live or happen to be in another EEC Member State on the day of the elections?

21.02.1984

25. Question by Mr Maurice MARTIN (H-760/83)

Subject: American wine imports into the Community

The Commission has recently drawn up a proposal for a regulation on the marketing or delivery for direct human consumption of certain imported wines which have been the subject of wine-making practices not laid down in Regulation (EEC) 337/79.

In its explanatory memorandum, the Commission states that it did not deem it necessary to consult the bodies representing the various professional groups and consumers. Does the Council intend to consult the European Parliament on this important proposal for a regulation?

22.2.1984

26. Question by Miss HOOPER (H-761/83)

Subject : Teaching of religion on the Greek Island of Syra

It appears that more than 300 children of Greek Catholic parents on the Greek island of Syra (Cyclades) are not permitted to receive instruction in the Catholic faith in their schools even though the Greek law, 4397/16/24.9.1929, requires a state salaried teacher to be appointed for this purpose. They have unsuccessfully petitioned the Greek Government to this end.

Given that freedom of religion, including the religious formation of children, obtains in the European Community, will the Council make representations to the Greek Government as well as a frequently stated commitment to freedom of education to remedy this injustice.

23.02.1984

27. Question by Mr LAGAKOS (H-773/83)

Subject: Part-session in Strasbourg from 13-17 February
(shortage of Greek officials)

During the part-session of Parliament from 13-17 February 1984, publication of the Greek edition of the daily bulletin 'Today's Sitting' had to be interrupted owing to 'a shortage of editorial staff' in the Greek section of Parliament's Publications and Briefings Division.

The same thing has happened in the past in departments of other Community institutions, such as the Council's interpretation service, and it was particularly noticeable during the Greek Presidency, when the requirements were greater.

Does not the Council think that the balance should be restored and that recruitment policy in all the Community institutions should be so designed as to take account of actual service requirements and fair distribution of posts by nationality?

28.2.1984

28. Question by Mr. NEWTON DUNN (H-775/83)

Subject : Article 431 of the 1984 Budget

Having regard to the Tripartite Agreement concerning new expenditure lines in the Budget, how soon may we expect progress towards the earliest possible implementation of Article 431 of the 1984 Budget ?

29.02.1984

29. Question by Mr TYRRELL (H-785/83)

Subject : Construction by the Council of a building in
Brussels

On 20-21 January the Council agreed to construct a new building for itself in Brussels, the Council becoming the owner of the site and building on completion of the work. What implications, if any, does this decision to purchase, rather than rent, have for establishing the seat of the Institutions?

7.3.1984

30. Question by Mr EYRAUD (H-786/83)

Subject: CAP

In order to break the deadlock within the Community by rationalizing the CAP, the Commission has asked the Council¹ for authorization to open negotiations within GATT for the partial suspension of tariff concessions in the by-products of the maize industry: corn gluten, draff and maize germ cake.

Why has the Council refused to give the Commission the necessary authorization?

7.3.1984

¹ Commission Programme for 1984

31. Question by Mr FORTH (H-4/84)

Subject: Detention of prisoners in ACP countries

In light of public concern regarding the detention of prisoners in ACP countries, and particularly Guinea, for prolonged periods of time without trial and without contact with their families, what means are available or are contemplated to address this problem, and will it be covered in the negotiations of Lomé III?

13.3.1984

QUESTIONS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE TEN MEMBER STATES OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES MEETING IN POLITICAL COOPERATION

32. Question by Mr ISRAEL (H-629/83) (x)

Subject: Policy of the Ten towards the situation in Afghanistan

Have the ten Foreign Ministers been able to reconsider the European Parliament's June 1982 resolution calling for recognition of the Afghan resistance as a legitimate national liberation force, and do they in the same spirit intend to express their support for the efforts made by the Pakistani Government in its indirect negotiations with the Kabul Government under the auspices of the UN, to obtain successively: the complete withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces and civil and military advisers; self-determination for the Afghan people without any external interference; the internationally guaranteed definition of Afghanistan as a non-aligned state; the voluntary return of the refugees?

12.1.1984

33. Question by Mr PAPAEFSTRATIOU (H-672/83) (x)

Subject: Creation of nuclear-free zone in Balkans

Does the Greek PASOK Government's initiative for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans fit into the framework of political cooperation between the EEC Member States, and what is the Foreign Ministers' view of this matter?

26.1.84

(x) Priority by reason of being carried over from preceding Question Time pursuant to the President's decision of 14.12.76

34. Question by Mr ALAVANOS (H-685/83) (x)

Subject: Effective condemnation of Denktash's pseudo-State

Following Denktash's illegal declaration of a so-called Turkish-Cypriot State, the Ten did no more than deliver a verbal condemnation and failed to take concrete measures to discourage effectively this action by Denktash. On the contrary, products from the occupied northern sector of Cyprus continue to enter the Community freely and none of the previously existing trade arrangements have been suspended. Can the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation state what concrete sanctions they intend to take to demonstrate their effective condemnation of Denktash's pseudo-State and their support for Resolution 541 of the UN Security Council?

30.1.1984

(x) Priority by reason of being carried over from preceding Question Time pursuant to the President's decision of 14.12.76

35. Question by Mr KALLIAS (H-714/83)*

Subject: Persecution of Greeks in Albania

Whereas, although it has - quite rightly - concerned itself with the situation in extremely remote parts of the world, the European Parliament has not systematically discussed the situation in Albania, which is in Europe, nor has the Community taken any action in this respect.

Whereas, moreover, although the problem of the freedom of Greek Northern Epirus, which is still under Albanian subjugation, falls outside both the scope of debates in the European Parliament and the purview of the Community institutions, the Albanian regime's treatment of the Greek population in Northern Epirus should be a matter for consideration by the Foreign Ministers.

Have they taken or do they intend to take action

1. to enable the hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of Northern Epirus to practise their religious faith freely and to secure the opening of all Christian places of worship?
2. to enable the Greek schools to function?
3. to enable the inhabitants of Northern Epirus to communicate freely with their relatives resident in Greece?
4. to secure the release of the thousands of political detainees interned in prisons or concentration camps who are tortured because of their ethnic origin, their religious faith and their ideological convictions?

* Former oral question without debate (O-122/83), converted into a question for question time.

12.12.1983

36. Question by Mr PÖTTERING (H-725/83) *

Subject: Sentences imposed on civil rights activists in the Soviet Union

According to reports in the press, several civil rights activists have again been sentenced in the Soviet Union. The Catholic priest Sigitas Tamkevicius from Lithuania has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment and four years' internal exile for 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'. The Latvian Baptists, Janis Rozkalns and Janis Veveris have received five years in a labour camp plus three years' internal exile and four years in a labour camp, respectively. They were accused of Latvian nationalism. Tatiana Trusova, a teacher, has been sentenced to 18 months in a labour camp. Her husband, Victor Grinev, is currently serving a six-year sentence for 'slandering the Soviet state'. Finally, civil rights activists Sergei Khodorovich and Vladimir Albrecht have each been sentenced to three years in a labour camp for slandering the Soviet state.

Is the President of the Foreign Ministers meeting in political co-operation aware of these cases and do these amount to violations of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe? Are the Foreign Ministers prepared to take action on behalf of the persons concerned?

13.01.1984

* Former oral question without debate (0-137/83) converted into a question for question time.

37. Question by Mr RADOUX (H-762/83)*

Subject: Progress to be made towards greater integration between European political cooperation and the Council of the Community

1. Political cooperation, which originated in discussions between governments, has now developed into full-scale coordination of the foreign policies of the Member States of the Community on many topical issues and within the United Nations.

This development has necessitated, in the interests of consistency, effectiveness and rationalization, a certain involvement of the institutions created by the Treaties in the political activities of the Ten.

For example:

- the involvement of the Commission in the work of political cooperation,
- the debates of the European Parliament and the dialogue between Parliament and the presidency of the Council on political cooperation,
- the discussion of aspects of political cooperation at meetings held on the fringes of or complementing Council meetings.

2. In other words, rapprochement already exists. It would be logical to progress towards integration, since certain problems cannot be understood properly unless they are considered in all their ramifications as is the case of the Euro-Arab dialogue, the Middle East, North-South and East-West relations, and the situation in Latin America, Turkey, Cyprus, Ethiopia, etc. This gradual integration should not, however, be used as a pretext to replace existing Community procedures by looser forms of intergovernmental consultation.

* Former oral questions without debate (0-139/83), converted into a question for question time

3. This situation ought to help make political cooperation more effective:
- by giving it, in the context of discussions between Member States, the importance it ought to have in relation to other activities deriving from the Treaties,
 - by reducing the excessive role played by the Presidency and thus ensuring greater continuity in political cooperation,
 - by rationalizing communication procedures within the Community.
4. Would the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation consider, to this end,
- providing political cooperation with a nucleus of permanent staff (attached to the General Secretariat of the Council) which would summarize the conclusions of the groups and the Political Committee for subsequent discussion and adoption by the Ten,
 - holding meetings of working groups and the Political Committee at the headquarters of the Council rather than in the capital city of whichever country holds the presidency,
 - extending the method of the 'troika' to all meetings and discussions held in the context of political cooperation,
 - making it a general rule to devote part of all Council meetings of Foreign Ministers to political cooperation,
 - involving the representative of the Commission (when there is a delegation of that institution on the spot) in the discussions held by the Ambassadors of the Ten in third countries,
 - submitting to the European Council dossiers summarizing the wide implications of political cooperation and issues arising from Community action?

16.1.1984

38. Question by Mr HABSBURG (H-640/83)

Subject: Situation of the ethnic Germans living in the People's Republic of Poland

Are the Foreign Ministers aware that of the approximately one million Germans living in the People's Republic of Poland, some 200,000 wish to emigrate to the Federal Republic of Germany and when they have made requests to this effect have, in countless cases, been subjected to severe pressure from the Polish authorities; do they know that a systematic policy of eradicating the German language is being carried out in Poland and are they prepared, given the special responsibility of the European Community for developments in Poland, not least as a result of the massive economic aid from the Community, to make representations to the government in Warsaw to change this policy which conflicts with human rights?

17.1.1984

39. Question by Sir Peter VANNECK (H-661/83)

Subject: Emergency arrangements to ensure telecommunications in the Community

Have Member States made contingency arrangements to ensure telecommunications links within the European Community in the event of an emergency, for example in the event of Soviet deployment of satellite jammers?

20.01.1984

40. Question by Mr PLASKOVITIS (H-707/83)

Subject: Proposals concerning Poland by the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany

According to the Greek and international press, the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany submitted proposals concerning Poland, which were then refined upon by a Council working party in Paris.

What do the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation know of these proposals and what can they reveal to Parliament of their contents and the position the Ten are likely to adopt?

10.2.1984

41. Question by Mr EPHREMIDIS (H-748/83)

Subject : Use of space for military purposes by the USA

The USA, in violation of UN Resolution 37/83 on preventing the arms race in space, is going ahead with the production of anti-satellite weapons, while tests of anti-satellite missiles have already begun, thus transferring the escalating arms race into space.

Can the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation say how they view these actions by the USA, particularly after the worldwide outcry at arms escalation to date with the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, and why they have not reacted to prevent the transformation of space into a test range for new forms of armaments, seeing that Europe itself would be the first victim of any nuclear clash?

16.2.1984

42. Question by Mr ADAMOU (H-769/83)

Subject: Recent statements by Mr Mitterrand

In recent statements in The Hague, Mr Mitterrand, the President of the French Republic, the country which also holds the presidency of the EEC, maintained that the EEC must develop joint space programmes of a clearly military character.

Can the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation say whether these statements also reflect the official position of the Council and come within the scope of the Treaties, and whether they propose to place this subject on the agenda of their forthcoming meetings in political cooperation?

28.2.1984

43. Question by Mr CARDIA (H-789/83)

Subject: Military initiatives by Morocco

Following the recent reports of further serious offensives launched on the territory of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic by the Moroccan armed forces, the ultimate objective of which is to divide the territory of the Western Sahara, and which heighten tension among the neighbouring countries, and in view of the successive resolutions passed by the OAU and the recent UN resolution calling for direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front as a prerequisite for a ceasefire and the holding of a free referendum to enable the Saharan people to exercise their right to self-determination, do the Ministers intend to condemn Morocco's military initiatives on the grounds that these threaten to engulf the entire region in conflict, in addition to the sufferings inflicted on the local population, and what action do they intend to take through the appropriate channels to promote the resumption of the negotiating process along the lines laid down by the above-mentioned international organizations with a view to guaranteeing the right of the Saharan people to a homeland and helping to restore peace and full cooperation between the Maghreb states and peoples in the Mediterranean area?

8.3.1984

