

reference to the recruitment of a 'native speaker of English'. The Commission readily agrees that such a wording was inadequate, as the aim of the advertisement was simply to recruit someone with a good enough level of English to be able to deal with the written and oral enquiries addressed to the Centre in English, given that it was proving impossible to deal fast enough with the sheer number of such enquiries.

This apparently discriminatory wording should have been formulated differently in order to make clear that considering the nature of the vacancy to be filled, a high standard of knowledge of a particular language was required. In that situation, as the Commission stated in its answer to written question E-0779/01, such a requirement is not considered discriminatory.

Nevertheless, the recruitment procedure was carried out 'openly' through interviews with candidates, many of whom had a good knowledge of English without English necessarily being their mother tongue. Even though the person recruited is in fact a native English speaker, he also has many other qualities, including language abilities, in that he has a very good knowledge of another EU official language.

In any case, the Commission has notified East West Consulting that the wording of the notice was inappropriate and has asked the company to take all necessary measures to prevent such an incident from reoccurring.

(2002/C 134 E/142)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2904/01
by Graham Watson (ELDR) to the Council

(22 October 2001)

Subject: Visits of Taiwanese Government officials to EU Member States

Further to the Council's reply of 27 September to my question of 29 March ⁽¹⁾ – during which six months Taiwan enjoyed a flourishing democracy while the People's Republic of China suffered under six months of totalitarian government- would it specify what it means when it says that 'it does not encourage official visits'? Does this mean that such visits are not allowed?

⁽¹⁾ Written Question E-0945/01 – OJ C 364 E, 20.12.2001, p. 29.

Reply

(14 February 2002)

The Council itself has not invited any members of the Taiwanese government to Europe. However, there is no Council common position or any other legislative act that prevents visas from being issued to members of the Taiwanese government who are on an official visit to the Member States. The Council does not encourage such visits to the Member States of the EU.

(2002/C 134 E/143)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2905/01
by Pietro-Paolo Mennea (ELDR) to the Commission

(22 October 2001)

Subject: Regional funding for training

Can the Commission say whether there are any regions in Italy which, despite receiving funding for training from the European Social Fund, do not have any laws governing the use of such funding? Can it also ascertain whether part of the funding is used by some regions to finance the training of categories of profession which are not recognised by any law and for which there are no job opportunities?

If this is true, what decision will the Commission take on the subject?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission

(20 November 2001)

Under the Italian constitutional order, employment and training are the responsibility of the regions.

All regions in Italy receive funding for training from the European Social Fund, under Objectives 3 (centre and north) and 1 (south and islands). In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds⁽¹⁾, all regions have been provided with administrative instruments (regional operational programme, programme complement, etc.) governing access to these funds.

In particular, the programme complements which describe in detail the content of the actions were adopted by the programme's Monitoring Committees, which consist of all relevant partners (social partners, provincial authorities, etc.) who are in a position to verify the relevance of the choice made. The same applies to the selection criteria for training measures.

Consequently, in order to spend the funds awarded, it is imperative that the regions in receipt of such financial assistance create implementation mechanisms (circulars, guidelines).

In addition, in order to measure the effectiveness of assistance from the European Social Fund in terms of beneficiaries' ability to enter or return to the labour market, Community action is subject to ex-ante, in itinere and ex-post evaluation.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 161, 26.6.1999.

(2002/C 134 E/144)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2907/01

by Guido Bodrato (PPE-DE) and Thierry Cornillet (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(22 October 2001)

Subject: Lyon-Turin transalpine link

The Essen summit of December 1994 adopted a European programme of 14 priority infrastructure projects, including the Lyon-Turin transalpine link, which forms part of the Lyon-Turin-Trieste link. It was stated at the same summit that this link would come into service by 2010. Numerous measures and surveys, as well as the constant support of the European Union, enabled the Italian and French states to decide in a clear and irreversible fashion on the implementation of this new high-capacity goods and passenger railway link. This decision, which ties in very well with the political vision of this assembly, was favourably received. However, the report delivered by the intergovernmental committee and distributed after the summit, and the official documents signed on 29 January 2001, still contain elements of uncertainty which should be clarified as soon as possible.

The first of these is the projected date for implementation of the work. We must remember the date set at Essen and try to come as close to it as possible. All the studies carried out to date note that the existing rail line has reached saturation point, and take the view that a deadline of 2015 is too distant in the light of the genuine needs for a modal rebalancing of transalpine transport. However, the abovementioned documents unfortunately still contain a number of uncertainties as regards the date for final completion of the work and set out a programme of surveys and studies which are clearly scheduled to run beyond 2015. This is entirely unacceptable, given that 10 years have already been devoted to surveys and studies, and that the European Union has underlined the urgent need to find solutions to the problems of transalpine transport as early as possible.

Secondly, the two governments have postponed until 2006 the choice between full completion of the line and completion in two stages (first one tube, then the second), although the studies already carried out show clearly that the full approach is the most cost-effective, the safest and the one that will cause the least pollution to the alpine valleys.