

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2354/02  
by Michiel van Hulten (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: European farm subsidy for the Netherlands royal family

According to a report in the Volkskrant newspaper on 16 July 2002 under the headline 'Beatrix looks forward to Balkenende's arrival', Queen Beatrix told a group of Members of the Netherlands Second Chamber in February 1999 that the Netherlands royal house had received European subsidies for planting an olive grove at the Netherlands royal family's country estate at Porto Ercole in Italy.

1. Can the Commission confirm that the Netherlands royal house has received subsidies for planting an olive grove at Porto Ercole, Italy?
2. Does the Netherlands royal house receive other kinds of European subsidies, from the agricultural fund or from other funds (such as the European Social Fund)?
3. Is the subsidy to the Netherlands royal house granted under Article 33, paragraph 1(b) of the Treaty of Rome, which says that one of the objectives of the common agricultural policy is 'to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture'? If not, on the basis of what objective was it paid?
4. Does the Commission agree that insofar as any financial aid is granted to the agriculture sector it should be restricted to small farms with low incomes, and that even the ceiling of EUR 300 000 proposed by Commissioner Fischler is too high in some cases?
5. Does the Commission share the view that a decision to grant a subsidy should at least be based on an income and means test? Is it prepared to revise its plans accordingly?