

ORAL QUESTION O-0047/00

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pedro Aparicio Sánchez and Vasco Graça Moura, on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport
to the Commission

Subject: Commemoration of the fifth centenary of the discovery of Brazil and the birth of Charles V

This year marks the fifth centenary of the discovery of Brazil by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral. That anniversary concerns not only Portugal and Brazil but also Europe and the whole history of humankind. It has universal significance: it was the first sea voyage to unite four continents, since Cabral set out from Lisbon, stopped in Cape Verde, reached Brazil and continued his journey to India. It took place at the dawn of the age of the great European voyages of discovery which transformed the oceans into plains linking the continents of the Earth. It was the starting-point for the creation of one of the most important countries in the New World, which has been independent since 1822, and which also became a projection of European civilisation, a place of constant human and cultural interchange and a great crossroads for the different races and civilisations. It is now a democracy in which 150 million inhabitants speak Portuguese – one of the official languages of the European Union - as their sole national language.

The year 2000 also sees the 500th anniversary of the birth in Ghent of Emperor Charles V, a figure of outstanding importance in European history. His concept of Europe, which transcended geographical boundaries, his vision of a continental political area and his strategy for the commercial, cultural, political and military unification of many of the countries which now comprise the European Union make Charles V a significant figure in the genesis of the European idea. Until his retirement to Yuste, he travelled tirelessly through the countries of his empire, marking some of the most important pages in their history. The anniversary of his birth commemorates an event of universal significance and presents a great opportunity to study the history of the European idea and invite the public to participate.

Bearing this in mind, and without rejecting a critical approach to history, the European Parliament should associate itself with events to commemorate the fifth centenary of the discovery of Brazil and the birth of Charles V.

What action will the Commission take to commemorate these events?

Tabled: 29.03.2000

Forwarded: 31.03.2000

Deadline for reply: 07.04.2000