

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2342/06
by Luis Capoulas Santos (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Controversy over agri-environmental measures

There are reports in the latest editions of several Portuguese newspapers that the Commission President's Cabinet and the Agriculture Commissioner are taking different attitudes to the Portuguese Government's suspension of payments under the agri-environmental measures.

Whereas Commissioner Fischer Boel considers that management decisions concerning the agri-environmental measures are a national matter and the Portuguese Government is entitled to discontinue the aid payments in question, a member of President Barroso's Cabinet has said that the Commission President is very worried and that his Cabinet believes that Portugal is in this case failing to fulfil its obligations.

Bearing in mind the seriousness of these reports – given not just the disagreement within the Commission, but also the fact that what is involved amounts to unacceptable interference by the President's Cabinet in a Member State's internal affairs – the Commission needs to clarify the position as quickly as possible.

1. What is the official Commission view on this matter?
2. Can the Commission explain why President Barroso's Cabinet is meddling in a dispute between a national government and a farmers' union?