

E-9866/10EN

Answer given by Mr Barroso
on behalf of the Commission
(14.2.2011)

1. – 2. As already explained in earlier replies to parliamentary questions, Commissioners may attend conferences. The Commission as an institution is not invited to the Bilderberg conference and does not receive reports from that conference.

The Commission can nevertheless inform that Commissioners attending a Bilderberg Conference are on mission, as participants. They do not represent the Institution at the Conference. The participation of Commissioners in the Bilderberg conference is similar to other meetings which Commissioners have with stakeholders and does not in any way impinge on their independence. They may attend this conference just like many other events in order to broaden their information on a wide range of issues and to meet representatives of civil society. Like other holders of public office at national or international level, Commissioners take part in the debate and exchange of ideas.

Commissioner Kroes participated in discussions related to health policy, the future of Europe and the global financial crisis, Commissioner Almunia participated in discussions related to EU policies including the economic situation and the exit from the financial crisis and Commissioner De Gucht participated in discussions related to the global economic and financial crisis and the transatlantic relationship between the United States and the EU.

The participation of Commissioners in the Bilderberg Conference is individual as there is no institutional, legal or working relation between the Commission and the Bilderberg group. The Bilderberg invitees have no particular influence on the Commission's policies.

It is important to recall that in the performance of their duty Commissioners remain completely independent. They neither seek nor take instructions from any government or other institution, body, office or entity.

3. The Commissioners' travel expenses were paid by the Commission, as for any mission. No other body or organisation funded by the EU contributed to these expenses.

4. The Commissioners Rehn and Hedegaard were also invited to a Bilderberg Conference in Spain 4 June 2010, but they did not attend.

5. The above mentioned Commissioners have not participated in discussions about the 'global warming/ cooling issue' at the Conference.

6. The Commission has no knowledge of discussions concerning the attendance of the above mentioned Commissioners at the Bilderberg conference with other Members of the Commission, Members of Parliament, Mr Barroso or Mr Van Rompuy.