

On 11 February 1999, the St. Petersburg arbitration court stripped the school of its right to use the premises. An appeal has been lodged, however. The Delegation of the Commission is following the results of the legal procedure.

(1999/C 341/195)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0653/99
by Mark Watts (PSE) to the Commission

(9 March 1999)

Subject: Seal pups in the White Sea, Russia

In the light of evidence obtained by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, (The Guardian, 2.3.1999), that the EU ban on the importation of baby seal skins is not being enforced, what action is the Commission proposing to take to ensure this abuse is eliminated?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(8 April 1999)

The evidence cited by the Honourable Member bears no relation to the enforcement of the Community ban on the importation of white-coat skins of harp seals as exports are apparently to Norway, which is of course not bound by the legislation concerned.

(1999/C 341/196)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0656/99
by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission

(26 March 1999)

Subject: Closure of Parliament on account of a European farmers' demonstration

Prompted by the demonstration due to be staged in Brussels on Monday, 22 February 1999, in which farmers from all over Europe were intent on taking to the streets to protest against milk quotas, the Secretary-General of Parliament, Julian Priestley, issued a notice in which he informed staff that Parliament's offices would be closed, institutional business would cease, and the entire city of Brussels would be without public transport services and in effect under siege.

Given that, by staging demonstrations, farmers are exercising their democratic rights, as they are entitled to do as citizens of the Union and, moreover, representatives of a major occupational group, and that a similar demonstration in Strasbourg on 10 February 1999 passed off without incident, can the Commission say:

1. whether it considers that the above measures were an exaggerated response and infringed the right of EU citizens to speak out and protest;
2. whether it considers that the measures were intended to thwart debate and joint discussion of farmers' problems;
3. whether it considers that the decision in question warrants a reprimand?

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission

(25 March 1999)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to her Written Question E-605/99 ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 325, 12.11.1999, p. 124.