

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission

(21 September 2000)

The Commission is well aware of the doubts expressed by some as regards the quality of the air in civil aircraft. It is also aware of the studies conducted in this area by various scientists and of the investigations conducted by several European and foreign administrations.

No other aspect of those studies and investigations enables it to be concluded that there is a particular risk that justifies immediate action. Nevertheless, by way of a precaution, the Commission stated in its communication on the protection of air passengers⁽¹⁾ that it was going to set up a group of independent experts in order to identify the factors enabling it to form its own opinion. The work will be continued during 2001.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2000) 365 final.

(2001/C 103 E/268)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2851/00**by Mogens Camre (UEN) to the Commission**

(5 September 2000)

Subject: Aid from the European Union to NGOs in Denmark

1. Which private organisations (NGOs) active in Denmark in the field of action to combat racism and xenophobia receive aid from the European Union?
2. How much money does each of these organisations receive?
3. What documentary evidence does the Commission have to show that the aid granted is being used for the stated purposes?
4. What documentary evidence does the Commission have to show that the recipient organisations are democratically run or that their leaders represent actual legitimate interest groups that are able to fulfil the objectives in respect of which money has been requested?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission

(4 October 2000)

Up until 1998, budget line B3-4114 (Measures to combat racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism) allowed funding of specific actions against racism and xenophobia. In 1998, one organisation in Denmark, AOF — The Workers Education Association (Vejle) received funding (€106 258 for a project of multicultural training of employers and employees 'Xenobus — Europa bussen der Abner Dore').

In 1999, budget line B3-2006 (pilot projects on multicultural integration) allowed funding of pilot actions in this field, but no Danish organisation was selected as a direct beneficiary under the calls for proposals published by the Commission. Since these calls for proposals called for a trans-national partnership, some of the beneficiaries work in partnership with Danish organisations.

For 2000, budget line B5-803 allows the Commission to prepare for the new Community programme on combating discrimination proposed by the Commission on 25 November 1999⁽¹⁾ in the framework of a package of proposals under Article 13 of the EC Treaty. In this context, the Commission wishes to subsidise initiatives which contribute to the development of policies and practice to combat discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. The selection process for projects to be funded in 2000 is nearing completion following a call for proposals.

The Commission examines the proposals for funding submitted in the framework of calls for proposals on the basis of a complete description of the initiative and supporting documents. These documents include the statutes of the organisation confirming its status under national law, evidence of their experience in the field and their ability to manage Community funds. This evidence is examined before the Commission agrees to provide a subsidy for the planned action.

Projects selected for funding are required to send intermediate reports, a final statement of accounts and a final report on the outcome of the project. These documents are verified and evaluated before payment of the last instalment of the subsidy. Audits are carried out on a regular basis and on an ad hoc basis whenever doubts about sound management of a specific project arise. Moreover, the Commission has contracted an independent organisation to carry out an evaluation of the projects funded in 1999.

⁽¹⁾ COM(1999) 567 final.

(2001/C 103 E/269)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2856/00

by Winfried Menrad (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(8 September 2000)

Subject: Consumer protection against the use of building materials liable to cause chemical contamination of houses

The marketing and use of products containing certain dangerous materials is restricted by Directive 76/769 ⁽¹⁾.

Recently I have been receiving a growing number of questions on this subject from members of my constituency. According to these informants, building materials containing, for example, formaldehyde are often used.

I therefore wish to ask the Commission:

1. Is action being taken to extend the Directive accordingly or to present a proposal for a new directive which would meet these demands?
2. To what extent can liability of the builders or vendors of houses contaminated in this way be established? Does a reversal of the burden of proof in favour of those resident in contaminated houses exist, or are there plans for European legislation along these lines?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 262, 27.9.1976, p. 201.

Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission

(23 October 2000)

Council Directive 76/769/EEC of 27 July 1976 ⁽¹⁾ on the marketing and use of dangerous substances and preparations already bans or restricts the use of several dangerous substances in building materials e.g. asbestos and pentachlorophenol. The Directive is continually amended to introduce new restrictions on the use of substances when a need for restrictions has been established through risk assessments and analyses of the advantages and drawbacks of such restrictions. At present there are no plans to restrict the marketing and use of formaldehyde at Community level.