Malaria kills more than a million people a year and is heavily concentrated in the poorest countries and populations. Recent advances in biotechnology point to a possible malaria vaccine. One would think that this would be high on the agenda of both the international community and the private pharmaceutical firms but for a long time it was not. A recent study found for example that only around US $ 80 million a year is spent on malaria research, and only a very small fraction of that on vaccines. However, malaria and the lack of public and private investment in the development of a vaccine have come more to the fore, thanks to several initiatives of the World health organisation (WHO) and also in the context of the Community’s Fifth framework programme for research.

The lack of investment in the research and development of a malaria vaccine is mainly due to the fact that investment in research and development of new technologies is overwhelmingly directed at rich country problems because these countries have the largest profitable markets. A similar situation has also been observed in relation to the lack of investment in an Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) vaccine adapted to the developing world strains or public health systems.

The evidence points towards an important challenge, as yet mainly unrecognised, related to the lack of mobilisation of global science and technology to address the crisis of public health in general, and malaria and AIDS in particular, presently confronting the countries with the poorest populations. Therefore creativity and new partnerships are needed to bridge the huge discrepancy between human need, scientific effort and market returns. A beginning of such an approach is presently being discussed within the Community in relation to an AIDS vaccine for developing countries but similar strategies could — and should — be adapted for malaria. The strategy followed for the AIDS vaccine has several components working in parallel rather than consecutively to gain time, and also to mutually reinforce each other. Some of the main components used at the Community are creating incentives for private industry to invest more in AIDS vaccine research and development for example through the incentives proposed in the orphan drug regulation presently discussed in the Parliament; creating a more credible market in developing countries by ensuring provision for existing vaccines in the national budgets and in the Community aid budgets; creating (together with our main partners) a potential market for the future by pledging financial support for countries to purchase the new vaccine once it becomes available; and increasing support from public sector finance for the research and the development of an AIDS vaccine appropriate for developing countries.

The Community is presently only at the beginning of this approach for AIDS and, if successful cooperation proves possible and fruitful, other initiatives could be envisaged. As indicated by the Honourable Member there is good reason for initiatives of this kind also concerning malaria.

The Commission would add that in the case of malaria, the Community recently increased its support for research and development in the Fifth framework programme through the publication of two calls for proposal (for the constitution of a cluster of Research and development projects on malaria vaccine and for specific research proposals in developing countries). In addition, the Community is also presently financing a demonstration clinical trial in the Gambia in partnership with a pharmaceutical firm.
Can the Commission confirm or deny that the UK violated the 13 September embargo on the sale of arms to Indonesia in the light of reports that three British Hawk warplanes were delivered secretly to Indonesia last week? If these reports are correct, can the Commission explain what action will be taken against the United Kingdom's breach of the embargo?

Does it recognise the urgent need for the EU to strengthen the 1998 Code of Conduct on the export of arms and, more importantly, the adoption of measures to prevent any attempts to circumvent the Code of Conduct?

**Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission**

(20 October 1999)

Trade in arms has, up to now, on the basis of Article 296 of the EC Treaty (ex Article 223) been exempted from the scope of application of Treaty rules, thereby preventing Community action. The arms trade is currently discussed in the context of the Common foreign and security policy (CFSP), with which the Commission is fully associated.

The Commission possesses neither the authority nor the means to confirm or deny possible violations of embargoes. Full responsibility for the licensing of arms exports belongs to national governments.

The Code has completed one year of existence and, as acknowledged in the first annual report, initial experiences of the Member States from its operation during this period are positive. It is undeniable, however, that there are grounds for continued strengthening of the code and its implementation. The aim of the annual review process is to identify such potential improvements. Naturally, any amendments to the Code need the support of all Member States.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION P-1797/99**

by Maria Sanders-ten Holte (ELDR) to the Commission

(1 October 1999)

Subject: Age discrimination against foreign pilots in France

An article in The Times of 2 September headed 'French age rule clips wings of British pilots' says that the French government operates an age limit of 60 for commercial pilots, whereas the age limit in other Member States is 65. As a result, commercial pilots aged between 60 and 65 are denied access to French airspace because of differences in age limits. This discrepancy prevents people from exercising their fundamental rights, in this instance the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of age. The question of discrimination on grounds of age is of topical importance in view of the forthcoming talks on a European charter of fundamental rights.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?
2. Does the Commission agree that this situation could be damaging to the commercial pilots affected?
3. Are such discrepancies in rules between Member States undesirable?
4. What does the Commission intend to do about this state of affairs?

**Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission**

(26 October 1999)

The Commission can inform the Honourable Member that it is fully aware of the situation in France with regard to age limits for pilots. The Commission does not condone this situation but is unable to intervene at present because currently flight crew licences are recognised for the purpose of overflying and landing of international civil flights, provided they are issued in accordance with Annex I to the Chicago Convention. This Annex contains a standard which prohibits the exercise of pilot-in-command duties on