29 September 1999 on progress made in the consultations with the United States on the development of a new generation noise standard for civil subsonic jet aeroplanes and phase-out measures for the noisiest categories of civil subsonic jet aeroplanes within Chapter 3.

2. The Commission is fully aware of the adoption on 16 September 1998 by the Parliament, on the basis of the report by Mr Valverde Lopez, of its opinion in first reading concerning the Commission proposal for a Council directive on the use and registration within the Community of certain types of civil subsonic jet aeroplanes which have been modified and recertificated as meeting the standards of Volume 1, Part II, Chapter 3 of Annex 16 to the Convention on international civil aviation, third edition (1).

3. Although the Commission has worked towards the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 925/1999 on 29 April 1999 (2) at the date provided for in its initial proposals, it did not object to the Council decision taken by unanimity, in this exceptional case and without creating a precedent, to postpone the date of application of the Regulation by one year. Under ex-Article 189c, it was for the Council to adopt the measures and thus, to ensure that its position on adoption did not conflict with that of the Parliament: it was not for the Commission to ensure Parliament’s approval. The Commission has always been anxious about safeguarding the adoption and the entry into force of this Regulation with a view to preserving its environmental objectives.

4. The Commission is aware of the financial efforts of Member States as well as the air transport industry itself with a view to ensuring a better compatibility between air transport activities and the quality of life for people living around airports. That is the reason why it proposed to freeze the development of the use of the noisiest category of aircraft in order to support these efforts.

5. and 6. As the Commissioner responsible for Transport and Energy has explained at the recent meeting of the committee for regional policy, transport and tourism of 12 October 1999 the perspective of a positive outcome in 2001 of the ongoing ICAO activities offers the Community the possibility of making a strategic choice between the entry into force of the Regulation on 4 May 2000 with the ensuing risk of a conflict that might jeopardise the development of a new ICAO noise standard and the adoption at ICAO level of a noise standard with an increased environmental benefit compared to the Regulation. If the United States confirm their willingness to fully contribute to the successful completion of the ICAO activities on the development of a new noise standard and rules for phasing-out the noisiest Chapter 3 aircraft, the Commission could accept under certain conditions to propose a further suspension of the date of application of Council Regulation (EC) No 925/1999. This strategic choice is, however, dependent upon the guarantees that the United States will be able to give.

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(2) OJ C 118, 17.4.1998.

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by Chris Davies (ELDR) to the Commission

(4 November 1999)

Subject: Endocrine-disrupting chemicals

What measures does the Commission intend to take in response to the recommendations made by Parliament in October 1998 in the presentation contained in its report A4-0281/98 (4)?

The Commission is currently in the process of finalising a Community strategy for endocrine disrupters, adoption of which was initially foreseen for March 1999, but which was delayed due to the resignation of the Commission. The objectives of the strategy are to identify the problem of endocrine disruption, its causes and consequences, and to identify appropriate policy action on the basis of the precautionary principle in order to respond quickly and effectively to the problem.

The strategy focuses on man-made chemicals and addresses the key requirements of further research, international co-operation, communication to the public and appropriate policy action, all of which are elements of the resolution adopted by the Parliament in October 1998. Recommendations are made for actions in the short-, medium- and long-term to cover these requirements.

Short-term actions represent a timeframe of 1-2 years and include the establishment of a list of substances for further evaluation of their role in endocrine disruption, the use of existing legislative instruments, the establishment of monitoring programmes, the identification of specific cases of consumer uses for special action, information exchange and international co-operation, communication to the public and consultation of stakeholders.

Medium-term actions will require a 2-4 year horizon and involve the development of agreed test methods (primarily in the framework of the Organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD), the gathering of research results from ongoing research projects, the launching of further research to address new research requirements and the identification of substitutes and voluntary initiatives.

Long-term actions will require a timeframe of more than 4 years and entail the amendment of existing and proposed legislation in order to take specific account of endocrine disrupters.

The strategy has undergone an extensive consultation process.

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(7 December 1999)

The first stage of implementation of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, requires Member States to adopt and send implementing legislation to the Commission. The Commission has taken legal action against Member States which have not sent such legislation. A further crucial stage in the implementation of the Directive involves the proposal of national lists of sites by the Member States. Although it is more than four years since expiry of the deadline for such lists fixed by the Directive, most Member States have still not sent complete lists. The Commission will continue to pursue the legal actions it has already started for this failure.

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(25 November 1999)