WRITTEN QUESTION E-3843/00
by Glenys Kinnock (PSE) to the Commission
(7 December 2000)

Subject: Iron foundry coke dumping by the People's Republic of China

Decision 1238/2000/ECSC (1) provisionally established PRC dumping of coke 80+ with a dumping margin in excess of 60%, with price undercutting of 29.5% resulting directly in a 9.9% loss of Community Industry market share. This Decision, if made definitive, would a) only result in an insignificant increase in cost of production for Community users of coke 80+, while b) partially remediying the injury suffered by the Community Industry.

Can the Commission confirm that if the provisional findings are confirmed at the definitive stage it intends to impose definitive anti-dumping measures?

Is the Commission aware that failure to adopt definitive measures will likely result in the permanent closure of some or all of the five SME private coke 80+ producers, all established in areas of high unemployment, and consequentially put at risk up to 1 600 direct jobs across the European Union, including Wales?

Does the Commission regard the PRC's use of child labour and its failure to apply environmental protection standards in any way approaching those of the EU in the production of coke 80+ as an unfair economic advantage in international trade?


Answer given by Mr Lamy on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2001)

The Honourable Member is referred to the answer which the Commission gave to oral question H-868/00 asked by Mrs Riis-Jørgensen at question time during the December 2000 session (1).

In the light of the incontrovertible results of the inquiry into the existence of such dumping and the injury to the Community industry, and of the conclusions drawn, namely, that the impact of the anti-dumping measures on end-users would be limited, the Commission decided on 14 December 2000 to impose definitive anti-dumping measures.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-3844/00
by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(7 December 2000)

Subject: Filmmaking in the EU

Does the Commission believe that the recent success of Danish cinema holds any lessons either for the MEDIA programme or for European filmmaking in general, and would EU subsidies be best directed at films with a broad appeal such as Babette's Feast, The Bear, Belle Epoque and Name of the Rose, rather than at abstruse arthouse products with very limited appeal? Could the Commission also say whether it believes that the practice of distributors requiring cinema owners to show a slate of studio-produced films if they wish to be offered the opportunity to show big Hollywood blockbusters is common within the EU, and, if so, is it consistent with current competition policy?
Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission

(7 February 2001)

The Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member’s attention to the long and distinguished record of the MEDIA and MEDIA II Programmes and to the MEDIA Plus Programme, which has started on 1 January 2001. These programmes, with a mixture of subsidies and loans, are very firmly targeted at companies, filmmakers and films which are produced for the widest possible European and international market. The programme’s efforts are particularly aimed at achieving the widest possible circulation for European films outside of their countries of origin.

Recently the MEDIA II Programme supported some 287 of the 457 European films in exhibition in 1999. The success of the selection and targeting of the programme is reflected in the fact that while these 287 films represented 62% of the total number of European films shown in Europe in 1999, they achieved more than 90% of the total admissions in the period.

The experience of the Media and the Media II programmes shows the widely divergent national characteristics of European film production. Both Babette’s Feast (Babette’s gæstebud, 1987) and Belle Epoque (1992) were recognised international successes following their winning of an Oscar award. Despite this, both films were only modest box office successes while a more recent winner, La Vita e Bella, has dwarfed all four films cited by the Honourable Member at the international Box Office. Other recent successes such as Todo Sobre Mi Madre, Asterix & Obelix, Festen, Breaking the Waves, Secrets & Lies, and the Fifth Element have all enjoyed strong support from the MEDIA Programme.

Agreements between distributors and cinema owners can, in principle, fall within the scope of the competition rules where they have a restrictive impact on competition. The practice described by the Honourable Member is capable of falling within this category but the Commission does not dispose of sufficient factual information to draw any conclusion as to whether or not it actually does. In particular, the Commission is unaware of how widespread the practice is and has received no complaints.

Writtten Question E-3851/00

by Paulo Casaca (PSE) to the Council

(20 December 2000)

Subject: Early retirement

It has been reported in the press that, at the Ecofin meeting of 8 November, the conclusions of an interim report drawn up by the Economic Policy Committee (EPC progress report on the impact of ageing populations on public pensions systems, Ecofin 303, 12791/00) were noted and endorsed. One of those conclusions is that, throughout the European Union, the retirement age will have to be raised and early-retirement schemes will have to be restricted if pensions schemes are to be sustainable.

This statement had enormous public impact, especially since most of the European (and in particular the Portuguese) press described it as coming from the ‘European Union’.

On 22 November I received a Communication Communication (SEC(2000) 2025 final) which contains a proposal for a Council regulation on early-retirement schemes within the Commission.

To my horror, the purpose of the proposal is not to restrict Commission officials’ existing access to early-retirement schemes but, rather, to promote an early-retirement scheme for 600 officials.