WRITTEN QUESTION E-1354/01
by Richard Corbett (PSE) to the Commission
(7 May 2001)

Subject: Human rights in Malaysia

Is the Commission aware of the arrest on 10 April of Mr Tian Chang Chua, Mr Hishamudin Rais, Mr Sarri Sungip and Mr Abdul Malekhusin by the Malaysian police, for the most part under the Internal Security Act?

Is the Commission aware that these (and possibly other) arrests have taken place just ahead of the presentation of a memorandum by human rights groups to the National Human Rights Commission set up two years ago by the Malaysian Government?

What is the Commission's assessment of these events, and what measures does the Commission intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2001)

The Commission is aware of the detention by the Malaysian police on 10 April and in the days that followed, of ten pro-reform activists under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

As stated by The Honourable Member, the detentions took place just days ahead of a rally called by human rights groups to present a memorandum to the National Human Rights Commission on the state of human rights in Malaysia.

This rally coincided with the second anniversary (14 April) of the conviction of Mr Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister and prisoner of conscience on Amnesty International's records.

The Commission is deeply concerned by these arrests, which it considers contrary to established democratic practice and which further deepen its previous concerns regarding the general human rights situation in Malaysia. In this respect it welcomes the fact that the Malaysian National Human Rights Commission has questioned the basis of the arrests.

The Commission has proposed that this subject be addressed with Member States in the Council.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1358/01
by Glyn Ford (PSE) to the Commission
(7 May 2001)

Subject: Xerox restructuring and consultation

Is the Commission aware of the failure by Xerox in Venrey in Holland, Dundalk in Ireland and Mitcheldean in the UK to consult with the workers regarding their current restructuring plans? In the light of the fact that Marks and Spencers in France have been forced by the French courts to suspend the closure of their stores until the restructuring proposals have been done in consultation with their workers, does the Commission not feel that Xerox should be legally bound to suspend their restructuring plans until they have legally consulted their workers?
Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission

(12 July 2001)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to his Written Questions E-0362/01, E-0363/01 and E-0366/01 (1). It has no further information on the failure by Xerox in Venrey (Holland), Dundalk (Ireland) and Mitcheldean (United Kingdom) to consult with the workers regarding their current restructuring plans.

As far as the Honourable Member’s question concerning sanctions in case of serious infringements of the right of employees to be informed and consulted is concerned, the Commission wishes to highlight, that in its proposal for a Council Directive establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the Community (2), the Commission proposed a provision which does not have a precedent in the Community directives on employee information and consultation. It states that in the case of a serious breach of the Directive, e.g. total absence of information and/or consultation before a decision being taken or publicly announced, or the withholding of important information or provision of false information affecting the effectiveness of the procedure, such decisions should not have legal effects on the employment contracts of the employees concerned until the moment when the employer has fulfilled its obligations or, if this is no longer possible, appropriate compensation has been fixed.

On 11 June 2001 the Council reached agreement on a compromise text for a common position. In this compromise the Council did not accept the Commission proposal for more stringent sanctions. The Commission will press for final adoption of this important Directive including the proposed sanctions

(2) OJ C 2, 5.1.1999.

(2001/C 364 E/100)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1366/01

by Cristiana Muscardini (UEN) to the Commission

(7 May 2001)

Subject: Protecting stray dogs in Romania

According to television reports, moves are under way to get rid of the approximately 200 000 stray dogs roaming the streets of Bucharest; the reports included footage of the mass burial sites used to dispose of the animals once they have been killed. Since they are strays, the dogs have become wild and the authorities consider them to be a danger. Special teams of non-professional dog-catchers are being used to round up the dogs and take them to a camp, ostensibly for sterilisation, although in actual fact they are shot as soon as they are outside the city boundaries. Animal-lovers, journalists, veterinarians — and even Brigitte Bardot — have been making trips to Bucharest to save as many of these dogs as they can from a certain death. However, the problem is on such a large scale that the goodwill of just a few individuals is not enough.

1. Can the Commission state whether it is aware of this problem?
2. Whether it is willing to negotiate with the Romanian Government with a view to finding a way out of this terrible situation?
3. Whether it has raised the issue of animal welfare during the enlargement negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission

(29 June 2001)

The Commission is aware of the policy on stray dogs which is practised by the Municipality of Bucharest. While recognising that stray dogs constitute a problem that needs to be addressed, the Commission finds that this policy may lead to a treatment of stray dogs which is unnecessarily cruel and disproportionate.