entities with a view to combating terrorism (1) and established an initial list in accordance with the procedure laid down in that Regulation (Council Decision 2001/927/EC of 27 December 2001 (2)). At the same time it also adopted Common Positions 2001/930/CFSP (3), which provides a basis for Community legislation based on Articles 60 (ex Article 73g) and 301 (ex Article 228a) of the EC Treaty.

(4) COM(2001)713.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3384/01
by Ioannis Marinos (PPE-DE) and Christos Zacharakis (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(7 December 2001)

Subject: Activities of bin Laden in occupied Cyprus

According to reports in the international press, the notorious terrorist Osama bin Laden has been spotted at least twice in recent years in the areas of northern Cyprus occupied by the Turkish army. The same reports claim that bin Laden was in occupied Cyprus to conduct business with a small bank based in the self-styled 'state' which is owned by a close relative of the leader of the occupying regime, R. Denktash. Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus is thus giving every indication of being one of the centres of international terrorism, and Turkey appears to be aiding and abetting the movements of this internationally wanted criminal.

What is the Commission's view of the role of Turkey and the Turkish-controlled regime in occupied Cyprus in covering up bin Laden's movements? Have bin Laden's bank transactions in the occupied sector of Cyprus been investigated? What steps will the Commission take to establish exactly what the terrorist did in occupied Cyprus? What action will it take to strike hard at the terrorist groups which have found a hospitable refuge in Turkey and that part of Cyprus illegally controlled by its army? Does the Commission also intend to investigate whether the 20 casinos which operate in Turkish-occupied Cyprus (there is not a single one in the free Republic of Cyprus) are being used to launder dirty money? Is Turkey among those countries which have frozen the accounts of terrorist organisations and, if so, which organisations?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2002)

On 23 September 2001, Turkey published an executive order (nr 13224) blocking the assets of 27 persons and entities named in the order. A second set of 39 names was added on 12 October 2001.

As the Honourable Member is aware, the Commission does not have official contacts with the Turkish Cypriot authorities. On this issue, there is no information available from other sources.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3400/01
by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) to the Commission
(21 December 2001)

Subject: Recent destruction of natural forests in northern Russia by illegal logging and smuggling of timber into the EU

1. Is the Commission aware of the report in the 'New Scientist', 13 October 2001, concerning the World Resources Institute (WRI)'s conclusion that the boreal forests of northern Russia have been 'reduced to fragments, broken up by logging, mines, farms, roads and power lines'?
2. Is the Commission aware that, according to that report, only one-seventh of Russia’s European forests survive as large undisturbed blocks of trees covering 50,000 hectares or more (the minimum required to preserve a fully intact ecosystem that can support large animals and regenerate after storm or fire)?

3. Is the Commission aware that, according to that report, illegal logging and timber-smuggling are largely responsible for this destruction, that an estimated 2.2 million cubic metres of timber are exported illegally each year across the border to Finland and that, moreover, most illegally felled wood goes to countries in Western Europe?

4. What steps does the Commission propose to take to aid Russia in repairing the damage caused by this illegal trade?

5. What steps does the Commission propose to take to put an end to this destruction and harmful trade whilst there are still some forests left?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission

(11 February 2002)

The Commission is aware of the article in New Scientist (NS), 13 October 2001, on boreal forests of northern Russia. The Commission is also familiar with the World Resources Institute/Global Forest Watch (WRI/GFW) report upon which much of the article is based. Community staff recently met with Mr Laestadius (mentioned in the NS Article) to discuss North-West Russian forestry issues.

The Joint Research Centre of the Commission has for the last two years been working with the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Centre for Ecology Problems and Forest Productivity through the SibTREES project in order to develop a pan-Russian forest monitoring system based on satellite image analysis, to identify hot-spots of forest clearance, to quantify rates of change and to identify and map intact forests for the entire Russian territory. It is worth noting that the area covered by the WRI report accounts for less than 15% of Russia’s forest areas and that the threat to remaining forests is not just restricted to the Northern European region.

In addition, through the Tacis Programme, the Commission has an ongoing programme to finance forest related projects in Russia:

(a) Forest resource management in the North-West Russia (€2.5 million);

(b) Improvements in forest fire response system (€1.95 million out of €4.8 million for assistance to the environmental sector); and

(c) Paanajarvi Park Development and Management under the Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) programme (€3.5 million). Tacis assistance is also envisaged in support of the implementation of the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol.

At the international level, combating illegal logging is one of the five elements of the Group of eight most industrialized countries (G8) Action programme on forests. The Commission is currently looking into how to follow-up the G8 Okinawa Summit Declaration which states inter alia that the G8 will ‘consider how best to combat illegal logging, including export and procurement practices’ and the Common Position of the sixth Environment Action Plan (EAP) which includes the priority action ‘to examine the possibilities to take active measures to prevent and combat trade in illegally harvested wood’. Illegal logging is a complex issue that needs to take into account a range of influences and factors, including trade but also measures on governance, capacity building and technical assistance. It is also taken into account in the discussions held at the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity.
In addition, the Commission is identifying possible actions to follow-up on the Declaration on combating illegal logging and forest crimes of the Ministerial Conference on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) in Indonesia in September 2001, and is developing a dialogue with the Member States and other stakeholders in this respect. The Commission is also convinced that developing transparency is a way to address the issue and this is part of several of Community's recent commitments linked to good governance.

(2002/C 229 E/021)  
WRITTEN QUESTION E-3415/01  
by Anna Karamanou (PSE) to the Commission  
(21 December 2001)

Subject: Use of torture and inhumane treatment of terrorist suspects in the USA

The measures used to combat terrorism in the USA have already resulted in many cases in the violation of the fundamental rights of detainees. A number of reports by human rights organisations have noted that people arrested on suspicion of engaging in terrorist acts did not have access to a lawyer and were also deprived of the right to communicate with relatives. In some cases, moreover, according to the Secretary-General of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, suspects are being tortured on the pretext of non-cooperation with the investigative authorities.

What is the position of the European Union on the violation of the principles of international law on human rights, and the International Convention against Torture, which the USA has ratified and which prohibits the use of torture or inhumane treatment to extract confessions from detainees, and how will the Commission respond to the risk of a similar state of affairs arising in the Member States of the EU?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission  
(11 February 2002)

Under Article 6 of the Treaty on the European Union, respect for human rights is one of the founding principles of the Union. The Union has consistently underlined its strong opposition to the practice of torture and its support for the relevant international standards. This is set out in Article 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights which states that 'no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'

On 9 April 2001 the General Affairs Council adopted the Guidelines to EU policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. These include guidance governing Union intervention in contacts with third countries (covering political dialogues, démarches and actions on individual cases) and in multilateral human rights fora. They emphasise that the Union will be guided by relevant international standards, including those enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Union is also striving for a successful conclusion to the ongoing negotiations on a draft optional protocol to the UN Convention against torture which will seek, inter alia, to improve the monitoring of places of detention.

With respect to the treatment of detainees by the United States, the Commission is closely monitoring developments. The Union maintains a regular dialogue with the United States in the field of human rights.

Respect for fundamental rights by the Member States is ensured by the infringement proceedings provided for in Article 226 of the EC Treaty and by the procedure laid down in Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. The former provides that if the alleged infringement falls within the field of application of