(2002/C 309 E/050)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0772/02
by Nicholas Clegg (ELDR) to the Commission
(18 March 2002)

Subject: Physical Agents (Noise) Directive

Did the European Commission conduct a full Regulatory Impact Assessment, especially as the proposal will affect SMEs, on the draft Physical Agents (Noise) Directive? If not, why not?

(2002/C 309 E/051)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0773/02
by Nicholas Clegg (ELDR) to the Commission
(18 March 2002)

Subject: Physical Agents (Vibrations) Directive

Did the European Commission conduct a full Regulatory Impact Assessment, especially as the proposal will affect SMEs, on the draft Physical Agents (Vibrations) Directive? If not, why not?

Joint answer
to Written Questions E-0772/02 and E-0773/02
given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission
(25 April 2002)

The Honourable Member should refer to the Commission’s answers to Written Question E-3212/01 from Mr Bowis and others (1) and Written Question E-0703/02 from Mr Bushill-Matthews and others (2).

(2) See page 38.

(2002/C 309 E/052)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0774/02
by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(18 March 2002)

Subject: The Return of Powers from the Commission to the Member States

At the opening of the Constitutional Convention on 28 February, Commission President Prodi said that the Commission had to be prepared to return powers to the Member States. Which specific competences does the Commission think should be returned, and will the Commission’s proposals in this area be relayed through Commissioners Barnier and Vitorino at the Convention or by the Commission President or his spokesman?

Answer given by Mr Prodi on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 2002)

The Commission President gave his address at the inaugural meeting of the Convention and it should be viewed in that political context. The members of the Convention are being asked to reflect together on the
future of the European project. The Union must review its main functions and define the scope of its activities more rigorously. In this context, all the institutions must consider the best way of performing their activities. The Commission is prepared to re-examine its own functions if this is necessary for the European project to succeed. It follows from this that in his address to the Convention the President of the Commission was not referring to any specific tasks currently performed by his institution but rather to a political state of mind. The Commission does not, of course, intend to abandon its fundamental role, which is that of an independent institution upholding the general interest. Once it has defined its position on the future of the Union’s institutional structure, it will be up to its representatives in the Convention to inform the latter accordingly.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0778/02**

by Hanja Maij-Weggen (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(19 March 2002)

Subject: Persecution of Christians in China

Is the Commission aware that, in southern China, members of the South Chinese church have very recently been persecuted and that at least five of its members, namely Gong Shengliang, Hu Yong (Hu Ling-wei), Xu Fuming (Xu Tong-lao), Li Ying (Li En hui) and Gong Bankun, have been sentenced to death and at least three members, namely Sun Minghua, Xiao Yanli (Xia Tong Ran) and Yi Chan-fu, have received long prison sentences?

Is the Commission aware that the arrest and interrogation of members of the South Chinese church were accompanied by violence and torture?

How will the Commission draw these human rights violations to the attention of the Chinese Government?

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

(24 April 2002)

The Commission shares the concern expressed about the situation of Christians in China, including, notably, the case of Pastor Gong Shengliang, which has been raised with China in the context of the Union’s human rights dialogue.

The Union is committed to strengthening respect for human rights everywhere in the world. They represent a central issue in the Union’s relations with third countries. The Commission is following closely the human rights situation in China. Religious freedom forms an important part of the Union’s general concern about human rights in China.

A bilateral dialogue on human rights was established between the Union and China in 1996. The Union has frank discussions with China in this framework and religious freedom is a key issue. The main concerns in addition to religious freedom include freedom of expression, freedom of association, repression of political dissidence, death penalty, ratification and implementation of United Nations Covenants (including the one on Political and Civil Rights), co-operation with United Nations (Memorandum of Understanding signed with United Nations now to be implemented), ethnic minorities, and arbitrary detention conditions.

The human rights situation in China is raised at all levels, including at Summit and Ministerial meetings. The Commissioner for External Relations raised it with Chinese Ministers on his recent visit.

The Commission will continue to follow closely, and raise with China, the situation of religious freedom in China, including the situation of individuals such as Pastor Gong.