The effects on health and safety are also seriously examined both on a European and international level. The technology developers have recognised that these aspects must be carefully addressed and several studies are under implementation. These issues are the subjects (among others) of a thematic network supported by the Fifth Framework Programme on Research and Technological Development (FP5) and a new proposal has been shortlisted for support during the evaluation of proposals submitted in the 14 December 2001 call for FP5.

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(2003/C 28 E/051)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0698/02
by Amalia Sartori (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(13 March 2002)

Subject: Exchange of sexual favours for humanitarian aid

The international press has reported that officials from non-governmental organisations involved in the distribution and management of humanitarian aid on behalf of the United Nations have been accused of sexually harassing refugees.

This information derives from enquiries carried out by the United Nations during operations to monitor aid activities in crisis zones.

The practice apparently involves giving food, medicines, and other aid in exchange for sexual favours from young women (in many cases under age).

This violent and contemptuous behaviour is exacerbated by the fact that no precautions are apparently taken, thereby encouraging the spread of AIDS, which is already at alarming levels in these regions.

Furthermore, it would seem that incidents of this kind have occurred in Liberia, Ivory Coast and East Timor, suggesting that this is by now an established practice.

Bearing in mind that United Nations humanitarian aid programmes are co-funded by the EU, what measures will the Commission take to shed light on these regrettable incidents, whose perpetrators, instead of bringing aid to populations in crisis, are humiliating and exploiting the very people they should be helping?

If these reports are found to be true, what will the Commission do to punish the guilty parties and ensure that incidents of this kind do not recur?

Answer given by Mr Nielson on behalf of the Commission
(8 May 2002)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written P-0687/02 by Mrs Sanders-Ten Holte (1).

(1) See page 43.

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(2003/C 28 E/052)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0701/02
by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(13 March 2002)

Subject: Removal of foam from fridges in the UK

On January 1, 2002, EU regulations pertaining to ozone-depleting substances which require that liquid coolant and foam in the walls of old fridges be removed before recycling came into force. This process
requires special equipment, which is not currently available in the U.K., partly, it is argued, because the British government did not wake-up in time to the full implications of the regulations. As a result, an increasing number of fridges are being ‘dumped’ in both town and countryside by owners who are unable to dispose of them legally.

In defence of the British government, the U.K. Environment Minister wrote an article which appeared in The Guardian newspaper on Monday 18th. February. Part of that article reads as follows:

This regulation has caused problems for us. The original regulation in 1998, which we as ministers discussed and signed up to, did not require removal of foam. However, in 1999 the wording of Article 16 of the regulation was changed, which left some uncertainty about the matter.

Between early 1999 and mid-2001, my officials on nine separate occasions asked the European Commission for formal clarification of the position. Not until June 2001 did the EC formally clarify that the regulation also applies to CFCs in fridge insulating foam.

Does the Commission accept that the regulation which was signed in the Council in 1998 did not require the removal of foam, and that the Commission acted unilaterally in changing the wording and substance of the regulation? If so, what is the legal basis for altering the substance of regulations agreed in Council?

Does the Commission accept that the British government had to write to the Commission on nine separate occasions before it was formally clarified that the regulation also applies to CFCs in fridge-insulating foam, and, if so, will the Commission consider recommending a three-month derogation for the U.K. until the relevant technology becomes widely available in the U.K.?

Could the Commission also indicate if the British government is currently awaiting formal clarification regarding the application of any other environmental regulations?

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(22 April 2002)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its replies given to a number of written questions on the issue of recovery of controlled substances from domestic refrigerators and freezers under Regulation (EC) No 2037/2000 of the Parliament and of the Council of 29 June 2000 on substances that deplete the ozone layer (1); written questions P-0005/022 (2); E-0082/023 (3), E-0255/024 (4) and P-0595/025 (5) by Mr Chris Davies and E-0315/026 (6) by Mr Graham Watson. These replies confirm the Honourable Member’s statement that on 1 January 2002, Regulation (EC) No 2037/2000 required ozone depleting substances (ODS) in the cooling circuit and the foam in the walls of old domestic refrigerators to be removed for destruction.

Regulation (EC) No 2037/2000 was signed by the Council and the Parliament on the 29 June 2000 and came into force on the 1 October 2000. The provisions of this Regulation concerning the mandatory recovery of controlled substances from both the coolant circuit and from the insulating foam of domestic refrigerators and freezers for destruction by technologies approved by the Parties, or by any other environmentally acceptable destruction technology, remained unchanged from December 1998 when the Council reached political agreement on a common position. The Commission, therefore, cannot accept the statement of the Honourable Member. It is neither in the competence of the Commission to change unilaterally the common position nor the Regulation nor has it attempted to do so.

The Commission received three letters from the British Government seeking clarification on Article 16 of the above-mentioned Regulation. Each letter raised different issues for clarification including the need to ban the export of refrigerators containing ozone depleting substances (ODS) and the need to recover ODS from domestic refrigerators. The Commission does not accept therefore that there were nine letters from the United Kingdom. The subjects of the letters were discussed in the Management Committee operating
under this Regulation, as this was the appropriate forum for discussion. The mandatory recovery and
destruction of controlled substances from both the coolant circuit and from the insulating foam of
domestic refrigerators and freezers was also discussed in a separate meeting with the United Kingdom. The
United Kingdom was first informed that it was practical to recover chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) from both
the cooling system and foam in used refrigerators at the first meeting of the Management Committee
under the new Regulation on 4 October 2000, just four days after the Regulation came into force.

The Commission has neither the legal competence to give the United Kingdom a unilateral temporary
derogation from the provisions under Article 16 of the Regulation on recovery of controlled substances
nor does it believe that it is necessary since the United Kingdom is presently fully in compliance with the
Regulation. According to information provided to the Commission, the United Kingdom is currently
storing domestic refrigerators and freezers until commercial facilities are in place for recovering ODS from
such equipment. The Commission understands the first recovery facilities are coming on stream by the
middle of 2002.

As regards the application of other environmental legislation, the Commission, in terms of its general duty
under Article 211 of the EC Treaty, continually liaises with all Member States to ensure full compliance
with both new and existing Community legislation.

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6.2.2003

Official Journal of the European Union

subject: European Register for Clinical Chemists

The profession of clinical chemist is not covered by a specific European directive and comes under the
general Directive 89/48/EEC (1), which regulates professions requiring at least three years' training. Clinical
chemists’ training lasts at least eight years, with at least four years at university. In an attempt to place
clinical chemists in the EU Member States on an equal footing, in qualitative terms, the European
Communities Confederation of Clinical Chemistry (EC4) has been set up in the meantime. Its register now
contains more than 1 000 clinical chemists who must previously have been nationally registered, have
undergone at least eight years' training and accept the EC4 Code of Conduct.

1. Does the Commission agree that the EC4 initiative facilitates freedom of movement for workers
along similar lines to the initiative by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations
(FEANI) (see Written Question E-3429/93 (2))?

2. To what extent can the EC4 title EurClinChem promote the mutual recognition of national diplomas
by Member States?

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(3) OJ 244, 29.9.2000.

2003/C 28 E/053

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0717/02

by Jules Maaten (ELDR) to the Commission

(14 March 2002)