WRITTEN QUESTION E-0727/02
by Michl Ebner (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(14 March 2002)

Subject: Buying cigarettes with memory-chip cards

According to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany's Federal Drugs Commissioner has spoken in favour of preventing under-16s from buying cigarettes from cigarette machines. Machines would need to be adapted so that they only accepted debit cards. The person's age would be stored in the debit card's chip.

What action is the Commission taking to protect young people against soft drugs (tobacco), which can lead to dependency and thus cause serious damage to health?

Would it be possible to extend such an approach protecting young people from having easy access to cigarettes to the whole of the EU?

Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission
(8 April 2002)

From a public health point of view, it would be desirable if there were some impediment to access to tobacco products for children and young people. However the establishment of a minimum age for the purchase of tobacco products, the control of the adherence to such an age limit, as well as the general regulation of the sale of tobacco products, do not come within the competence of the Commission, but that of the Member States.

In view of the importance of this subject the Commission intends, within the coming months, to put forward a proposal for a Council Recommendation for the prevention of smoking and for initiatives for a more targeted campaign against tobacco consumption and targeting youth in particular. In this proposal the Commission intends to include recommendations to the Member States on access to cigarette vending machines.

Furthermore, the Commission notes that its proposal for a Directive on tobacco product advertising and sponsorship (1) — which has been before Parliament since the middle of last year — and Directive 2001/37/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products (2) favour the protection of children and young people.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-0776/02
by Richard Corbett (PSE) to the Commission
(18 March 2002)

Subject: Presidential election in Madagascar

1. What is the Commission's position with regard to the presidential election in Madagascar?

2. What evidence, if any, has the Commission received through its representation or directly which indicates that outgoing President Didier Ratsarika has indulged in election rigging or political misconduct of any nature?

3. How much aid has the government of Madagascar received from (a) EU states and (b) the EU?

4. Has any aid been directed towards electoral assistance?
The Commission regrets the violence which has occurred in the aftermath of the presidential elections which took place in December 2001. It supports the mediation efforts of the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations, and has issued declarations encouraging the parties involved to enter into a democratic dialogue and demonstrate moderation.

The Commission is being informed of political developments through its Delegation in Antananarivo on a daily basis. Electoral observation reports provided to the Commission’s Delegation by the Local Electoral Consortium point to irregularities in the electoral process. The Consortium’s figures, however, are at odds with official data. Furthermore, they are only partial.

It has not been possible to reach a definitive conclusion on the election results because no external election monitoring took place.

In 2001, Madagascar received EUR 46.4 million in development aid from Member States (France, Germany, United Kingdom), and EUR 96.1 million from the Community (of which EUR 23 million from the European Investment Bank (EIB)).

Two Member States, namely Germany and the United Kingdom, have granted aid towards the electoral process by supporting the Local Electoral Consortium.

The Commission has not granted aid towards the electoral process. Nonetheless, it is considering the possibility of providing assistance, if new elections are held. To this end, it is proposing that Madagascar be considered as a priority country for elections observation under the 2002 budget line.

In light of the above, the Commission sent a mission to Madagascar last February 2002, in order to assess the needs for assistance in particular to domestic observers. The deployment of an Union Elections Observation Mission will, of course, be effected according to the established procedures, and will be preceded by an elections exploratory mission.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0809/02**

by Michl Ebner (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(25 March 2002)

Subject: Definition of raw milk

Can the Commission present an unambiguous definition of ‘raw milk’ and will it explain what efforts it has made to produce such a definition?

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0810/02**

by Michl Ebner (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(25 March 2002)

Subject: Clear ban on microfiltration

A clear ban on the microfiltration of raw milk on the production holding is absolutely essential.

Can the Commission state to what extent such a ban will be implemented and what action it proposes to take in this matter?