3. What can the Commission do to combat unnecessary price increases, bundled sales and sales pressure, particularly in the light of the letter of 22 May 2002 from the Dutch Competition Authority to NGN and the answer given by the Netherlands Government to parliamentary questions by members of the national assembly on 2 November 2001 (TK No 198), in which it suggested that the matter be referred to the Commission because of its transfrontier nature?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(6 August 2002)

1. The Commission is aware that Microsoft launched its Windows XP operating system in October 2001. The Commission is also aware that Microsoft is keen to ensure that users of older versions of the Windows operating system switch towards Windows XP.

2. The Commission has not yet formally investigated this issue. The Commission is therefore not in a position to confirm or deny such claims.

3. As the Honourable Member is aware, the Commission has expressed concerns in its ongoing investigation that Microsoft has, inter alia, restricted interoperability and engaged in tying in ways which are contrary to the Community's competition rules. In the context of its investigation, it is the Commission's aim to ensure that Microsoft does not use its market power in such a way that it can unlawfully engage in the types of practices outlined by the Honourable Member.

(2003/C137E/032)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1836/02
by Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(27 June 2002)

Subject: A Cohesion Fund for Latin America

It is generally agreed by political observers that the economic crisis in Latin America is undermining democracy, despite the democratic consolidation over the last fifteen years in such countries as Paraguay, Ecuador and Peru.

Following the excellent results obtained by certain initiatives, such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), it is now necessary to consider further initiatives. These could include the creation of a Cohesion Fund for Latin America, whose purpose would be to further the development of the least-favoured regions, in the hope of repeating the success of its EU counterpart.

Does the Commission consider that it should examine the possibility of creating such a Cohesion Fund, as a regional development instrument for Latin America, with the objective of supporting the least-favoured Latin American regions in their efforts to achieve a level of development which will contribute to consolidating democracy in Latin America?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission

(16 July 2002)

The economic development of the less favoured countries and regions of Latin America is one of the priorities of the cooperation pursued by the Community in Latin America. 50% of the EUR 3.4 billion allocated to cooperation with Latin America between 1993 and 2000 were devoted to social and human development and poverty reduction.

The creation of a cohesion fund for regional development in Latin America as well as the creation of a bi-regional solidarity fund proposed by the Parliament in its resolution on a global partnership and a common strategy for relations between the Union and Latin America, are interesting initiatives. Especially since poverty and social inequalities are two of the most striking problems in some Latin American countries.
However, the Commission is not in a position to create or run such funds. Neither does the Commission have the human resources nor the appropriate and flexible rules to manage or coordinate such funds.

The creation of these funds would require important financial resources. The Commission does not dispose of the financial resources necessary to create those funds.

(2003/C 137 E/033) WRITTEN QUESTION E-1837/02
by Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(27 June 2002)

Subject: A European tax to finance the Community budget

The proposal made by the Commission presidency for the creation of a European tax to finance the Community budget has elicited a wide range of reactions and comments in political, business and economic circles, despite the absence so far of any concrete details to back it up.

Given the Commission's powers of initiative as conferred on it by the Treaties, it is clear that the proposal will receive consideration for the medium- and long-term future, even though it remains hypothetical and has not, for the moment, led to any concrete decisions.

Can the Commission state whether this proposal for a European tax to finance the Community budget is based on any concrete initiative on the Commission's part, and provide information on the state of progress concerning any studies which have may have been drawn up by experts to propose to the Commission the structural bases which might support its President's proposal?

Answer given by Mrs Schreyer on behalf of the Commission

(13 September 2002)

Following Article 9 of the Council Decision of 29 September 2000 on the system of the European Communities own resources (2000/597/EC, Euratom) (1), the Commission shall undertake, before 1 January 2006, a general review of the own resources system. It committed itself before the Parliament to perform this review by the end of 2004. As part of the review, 'the question of creating new autonomous resources should be addressed'.

Ahead of this review, it could be useful to open a political debate with regard to the main options to tackle future revisions of the Union financing system. This could involve an examination how to maintain the level of resources needed to support EU policies in view of enlargement and to respond in the budgetary field, while respecting the principle of equity, to the need to better connect Europe and its Institutions to the general public by increasing their democratic accountability and transparency, a horizontal theme guiding the wider debate on the future of Europe.

These issues could in particular be discussed in the Convention on the future of Europe.

The outcome of these discussions will then be taken into account for the general review of the own resources system that the Commission shall undertake and in the preparations of the accompanied concrete proposals.