In the recently-published workplan 2003 (1), a report on the economic and social burden of alcohol, including issues of promotion of alcohol, protection of young people and children is provided for in the ‘health information and knowledge strand’. A pre-information tender notice has been issued in this connection.

In the strand of the plan dealing with ‘health determinants’ it is envisaged to 'Establish a network of expert organisations to support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the drinking of alcohol by young people and to contribute to further development of a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm; Initiate preparation of a conference on alcohol, health and society to be held in 2005; Promote the involvement of young people in the development of alcohol policies and activities — a priority of the Council Recommendation on alcohol and young people.'

A call for proposals (2) has recently been published in this respect.

It may also be mentioned that the Alcohol ad-hoc Working Party of the Commission, which has a membership with representatives of all Member States, holds its next meeting on 11/12 June 2003.

Council Directive 92/84/EEC of 19 October 1992 deals with the approximation of rates of excise duty on alcohol and alcoholic beverages (3). Under its provisions it is necessary for the excise duty rates laid down in that Directive to be reviewed periodically by Council. This review shall be based upon a Commission report. The Commission is preparing such a report at present, which will take into account all relevant issues, in particular the proper functioning of the internal market, competition between the different categories of alcoholic drinks, the real value of the rates of duty and the wider objectives of the EC Treaty, as provided by Article 8 of the said Directive. These considerations will also include the public health considerations mentioned by the Honourable Member.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-0916/03
by Claude Moraes (PSE) to the Commission
(24 March 2003)

Subject: Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

In the light of its Treaty obligations to maintain high standards of public health and educate the public about health risks, what action has the Commission taken or is it proposing to take on the possible risks of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) as the result of long- and short-haul travel on flights or long-distance rail and car travel?

What research has the Commission undertaken on DVT?

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission
(30 April 2003)

The Commission takes the issue of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and its possible links to travelling very seriously and shares your concern about this matter.

At present little is known about the link between DVT and air transport and in order to find an answer to the question of how far DVT is related to air transport and which measures could be taken, the Commission is co-financing a research programme with the United Kingdom government under the auspices of the World Health Organisation. The result will be published in a final report, which would be expected by the mid 2005, though provisional results are expected earlier.

As a precautionary measure, the Commission sent out a letter in January 2001, encouraging airlines to inform their passengers on the possible risks of DVT during long flights and on possible measures to take.
So far, no DVT related cases in the rail, car and coach transport sector have been brought to the attention of the Commission administration and, as a consequence, no initiative on this matter has been taken to date. If the Commission were to learn about such cases, it would immediately consider how to make sure that non air passengers were adequately informed of the possible risks.

(2003/C 268 E/175)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0923/03
by Florence Kuntz (EDD) to the Commission

(18 March 2003)

Subject: Doubts concerning the Lyon-Turin link

A transport infrastructure audit carried out at the request of the French Government has raised doubts concerning the Lyon-Turin rail link

Given that all the evidence points to the crucial importance of this link for ensuring a free flow of trade between the north and south of Europe and the existing Alpine crossings are overcrowded and vulnerable, this poses a serious threat to the economic development of several regions. A further aim of the project is to reduce the environmental impact of the traffic on this route by switching it from road to rail.

The Community budget is to support this project by financing 50% of the advance studies and, probably, 20% of its construction costs out of a total budget of EUR 13 billion.

Will the Commission confirm that it supports this project and will contribute to its funding and will it give details of the scale of its contribution?

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission

(10 April 2003)

The Commission has clearly expressed on many occasions, and in particular in its White Paper 'Transport policy for 2010: time to decide' (1) its desire for the completion of this priority project as soon as possible. It is an essential element in the development of the trans-European transport network and will contribute to rebalancing the transport flows crossing the Alps for the benefit of the railways. Its importance is all the more strengthened by the imminent enlargement to the East. The Commission's interest in it has been materialised by support for studies launched on the national sections and on the international part making up the project.

Over the period 1992-2000, the support granted to the project through the budget for the trans-European transport network broke down as follows (2):

- EUR 42 million were granted for the funding of technical studies relating to the international section, or around 45% of the actual costs, making the Community the main financer for this section of the project;
- EUR 16.5 million were earmarked for studies for the Lyon-Montmélian section;
- EUR 27.5 million went to studies and work relating to access lines in the Italian side and the Turin node and the future freight ring.

Over the period 2001-2006, the Commission, as part of the Indicative Multiannual Programme (IMP), has programmed the following amounts from the budget for the trans-European transport network:

- EUR 100 million for the completion of the programme of studies relating to the international section out of a total of EUR 371 million;