WRITTEN QUESTION E-2094/02
by Roger Helmer (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(16 July 2002)

Subject: EU funding of Palestinian terrorism

Would the Commission confirm that it has read the report entitled ‘Lifting the Veil on EU Funding and Palestinian Violence’ published in the Wall Street Journal Europe on 19 June 2002 and that it is taking immediate action to address the concerns raised in the article?

Would the Commission specifically confirm that it is investigating claims by Die Zeit that the EU’s large-scale funding of PA-TV is being used for propaganda and anti-Semitic purposes and to promote racism and xenophobia, which are now held to be illegal under the European Arrest Warrant?

Would the Commission outline what steps it is taking to ensure that money intended for ‘educational purposes’ is not being misused to fund religious intolerance of the Jews?

Would the Commission agree that, regardless of funding for budgetary management and accounting capacity in Palestine, it can no longer ensure that EU funds intended for reform and aid are not being misused to fund terrorism, especially when Mr Arafat has said that he ‘does not differentiate between the structure of his autonomy government and the Fatah movement’ (Die Zeit, authors Kleine-Brockhoff and Schirra).

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission

(23 October 2002)

The Commission can confirm that it has read the newspaper article referred to by the Honourable Member. This is largely based on an article which appeared in Die Zeit in June 2002 that contained an unacceptable number of inaccuracies and to which the Commission has responded. A copy of the Commission response will be sent direct to the Honourable Member.

It is incorrect to say that the Union is providing direct large-scale funding to PA TV (presumably referring to the Palestinian Broadcasting Company — PBC). The Commission initially contributed to the start-up of the PBC in 1994 along bilateral funding from some Member States. Plans for an additional grant of EUR 1.5 million were eventually cancelled in 1997 and the money de-committed.

Whilst the Commission has never provided funding for Palestinian textbooks (funding has been provided by a number of Member States on a bilateral basis), it nonetheless takes a very serious view of the allegations of incitement in their content. For this reason the Union representatives in Jerusalem and Ramallah have drawn up a report (entitled Palestinian Textbooks — 15 May 2002) on the matter which can be found on the web-site of the Council of the European Union (1).

The Commission is concerned about the issue of incitement via TV, print press, textbooks or any other medium and will continue, along with the Council, to raise these concerns with Chairman Arafat and the PA. In this context the Commission welcomes, as positive, the commitment in the 100-day action plan on reform of 25 June 2002 ‘to seek to reinforce … humanistic values, … and renounce fanaticism in the educational curricula and spread the spirit of democracy, enlightenment and openness on a wide scale’.

With regard to allegations of misuse of Union monies to fund terrorism, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to question E-1554/02 by Mr Bob Van Den Bos (2).

(1) http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.

(2) OJ C 92 E, 17.4.2003, p. 64.