The Parliament supported this approach in its Resolution of 4 July 2002 on core labour standards and social governance (1), while Member States have not yet completed the discussion on the Communication and the integrated strategy.

Some measures suggested in the Honourable Member’s question of the relate to, for instance, criminal law requires full involvement of the Member States.

The Commission has widened and strengthened its cooperation with the International Labour Organisation. This renewed cooperation was confirmed in the exchange of letters between the Commission and the Director General of the ILO on 14 May 2001. In addition, the annual High Level Meeting between the Commission and the ILO on 14 February 2002 agreed to launch technical cooperation on ILO programmes regarding core labour standards, poverty reduction and promotion of the ILO Decent work agenda.

The Commission strongly supported the establishment by the ILO in February 2002 of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation, and has committed itself to contributing to its work. The Commission will organise a High Level Seminar on 3-4 February 2003, with the participation of World Commission, and representatives of the Member States, Candidate Countries, Members of the Parliament, social partners, non-governmental organisations, local authorities.

The Member States have responded positively to the Commission Recommendation of 15 September 2000 (3) to ratify the ILO core Convention No 182 on the worst forms of child labour. All Member States have ratified Convention 182 and in addition all Member States have ratified Convention No 138 on the minimum age for employment.

(2) A5-0251/02.

(2004/C 88 E/0312) WRITTEN QUESTION P-3824/02
by Jan Wiersma (PSE) to the Commission
(20 December 2002)

Subject: Roma citizens — Buhusi

Has the Commission been informed of the serious incident that took place recently in the Romanian municipality Buhusi in which three Roma citizens were killed by the police?

What caused the incident and what explains the severe reaction of the Roma citizens to the police intervention that led to the tragic killing?

Can the Commission verify that this was not a case of use of excessive force by the police, keeping in mind the recent statement by the Council of Europe that this type of action still takes place during the searching of Romani houses or the arresting of suspected Roma, and if excessive force was used, what kind of action will the Commission take?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2003)

The Commission has been informed of the incident between the Romanian police forces and the Roma community from Buhusi, which took place on 5 December 2002, through the Romanian press, a report by a Roma Human Rights organisation and a declaration made by the police. The information available to the Commission shows that the incident resulted in two Roma persons killed and two others injured by the police, and four policemen injured as well.
The incident occurred as the police (a group of about 45 policemen, who were later joined by 40 gendarmes) set out to arrest four persons, all ethnic Romas, against whom arrest warrants had been issued for theft and assault.

According to the police, 200 persons armed with pitchforks and axes surrounded them; a riot erupted, the persons they had come to arrest tried to escape, whereupon the police warned them then started shooting.

According to a Roma Human Rights organisation the police used force disproportionately during the search, and the suspects were targeted because of their ethnic origin.

According to the first results of the investigation conducted by the Prosecution Office of Bacau, as reported by the head of the Public Order Directorate of the Romanian Police in a declaration made on 11 December 2002, the police forces used their weapons in self-defence after they were attacked by members of the Roma community.

The final conclusions of the investigation by the Prosecution Office are not yet available.

The Commission monitors respect and protection of minorities in candidate countries as part of the Copenhagen political criteria and reports on a yearly basis in its Regular Reports. The Commission will take into account all relevant information on this issue and, more generally, on treatment of Roma people by the police when drawing up this year’s Regular Report on Romania.

WRITTEN QUESTION P.3906/02
by Anna Karamanou (PSE) to the Commission
(7 January 2003)

Subject: Problem of malnutrition in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank

The latest available UN data show that there is a serious problem of malnutrition in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The Palestinians are mainly suffering from micronutrition deficiency — what the World Health Organisation refers to as ‘hidden starvation’. Micronutrition deficiency deprives children of proper development, damages their cognitive faculties often severely and immutably, depresses the immune system of both children and adults and weakens mental and physical powers. In exceptional cases, it may even cause blindness and death. At the same time, research carried out by the United States Agency for International Development reveals that four out of five children in Gaza and the West Bank suffer from iron and zinc deficiency and over 50% of children show signs of carbohydrate and vitamin A deficiency.

In what way does the Commission allocate EU financial aid to Palestine to help deal directly with this situation?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2003)

The Commission recently decided to allocate EUR 10 million in support to the World Food Programme (WFP) Emergency Operation Plan (EMOP) n. 10190 through its Food Security Budget Line in order to address the needs of the victims of conflict in the Palestinian Territories (PT). Target beneficiaries are some 360 000 vulnerable and destitute people from among the non-refugee Palestinian population. These include children under five, pregnant women and lactating mothers, the elderly, handicapped and chronically ill. These people were eligible for welfare assistance (cash and in kind) provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs, a programme that had to be discontinued due to the present crisis situation.