Regulation (EC) No 384/96 of 22 December 1995 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the Community (1), which states that a Community industry has to file a complaint with the Commission. This complaint should contain sufficient evidence as regards injury and dumping. So far, no such complaint has been received. In the event that such information is brought to the attention of the Commission, the evidence will of course be examined expeditiously.

As regards the current multilateral negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda, the Community proposes that all World Trade Organisation (WTO) Members agree to reduce all tariff duties considerably by compressing them into a flatter range of tariffs to eliminate tariff peaks and high tariffs. Given that the main goal of this round is sustainable development, and since exceptions and further sheltering of sectors can only result in distortions and costs that developing and least developed countries can ill afford, the mechanism shall apply without sheltering of any sector. This does not prevent the Community, though, from proposing implementation timetables that are in keeping with our economic sensitivities.

(1) OJ L 56, 6.3.1996.

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0306/03
by Hanja Maij-Weggen (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(4 February 2003)

Subject: Human rights situation in Zimbabwe

Is the Commission aware that the Amani Trust, a human rights organisation which works with victims of torture, has received threats to fire-bomb its offices and that the organisation has had to suspend its activities as a result?

Is the Commission also aware of the fate of Job Sikhala, MDC MP, Gabriel Shumba, a legal officer with the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Charles Mutama, Bishop Shumba and T. Magaya? Medical evidence has indicated that the five men were tortured with electricity.

Is the Commission prepared to arrange an inquiry into the cases of these individuals and the current position of the Armani Trust and publish the findings through an answer to this question?

Answer given by Mr Nielson on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2003)

The Commission is aware of the facts raised by the Honourable Member, which can be seen as concrete examples of the current decline in the human rights state of affairs in Zimbabwe. Reports received from the Commission's Delegation in Harare confirm the increased incidents of politically motivated violence, some of which are raised by the Honourable Member.

The Union reacted by issuing, on 20 February 2003, a declaration expressing its concern over the recent arbitrary arrests, inhuman treatment and torture of members of the opposition and civil society organisations. The Union calls on the government of Zimbabwe to end all harassment, intimidation and violence against them. It urges the government and all political stakeholders to open serious dialogue to overcoming the current overwhelming problems facing Zimbabwe on the humanitarian, social and economic fronts.

The respect of human rights, which form part of the essential elements of Cotonou, is one of the conditions under constant review in the framework of the 18 February 2002 Council Decision concluding consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Therefore, the Commission follows the human rights situation closely and has taken and will continue to take appropriate measures in response to the deteriorating situation in this country. However, the Commission is not in a position to conduct inquiries and report on individual cases.
The Commission deplores the harassment to which the Amani Trust was subject and which obliged it to cease operations. It was an independent and reputable organisation offering assistance to victims of all forms of organised violence, whose work in difficult circumstances in Zimbabwe was always appreciated.

(2004/C 88 E/0611)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0401/03
by Roy Perry (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(17 February 2003)

Subject: Transparency in the application of broadcasting legislation in the Czech Republic

In its latest Regular Report on the Czech Republic (1), the European Commission criticised that country’s ‘continued lack of transparency and stability in relation to questions of ownership and control of commercial TV stations’. It noted that ‘a second such dispute has now arisen that may also have to be solved in international arbitration courts’. The Commission furthermore notes that the Czech Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting ‘should ensure the timely, objective and effective application of broadcasting legislation’ and that ‘it remains particularly important to establish and supervise effectively a transparent and predictable regulatory framework’.

How will the Commission continue to monitor the handling by the Czech authorities of the problems of the past, such as the TV3 case which is mentioned by the Regular Report (the second such dispute), whereby EC investors were discriminated against in a licence transfer decision of the Czech Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting? Are any specific actions planned by the Commission?


Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(13 March 2003)

The concerns expressed by the Commission in its 2002 Regular Report (1) reflect the two ongoing disputes concerning foreign investment in Czech commercial television stations and the additional mid-2002 disagreements (now apparently solved) within the Czech Republic about control of the largest commercial channel. That these three issues were able to develop suggests that measures should be taken by the Czech authorities to improve matters in the sector via the amendment of relevant legislation, the modification of regulatory practice, or a combination of the two.

The 2002 Report also sought to highlight the central role that the regulator plays in such an environment, particularly at a time when (following recent adoption of new legislation) precedents are set and its authority must be established.

The audio-visual ‘acquis’ does not detail specific requirements about broadcasting sector regulation, nor about the licensing processes which have been at the centre of the TV3 dispute. The Television Without Frontiers Directive (1) requires that Member States be in a position to effectively implement the ‘acquis’, which gives the Commission grounds to express concerns with the general state of regulation in the sector, and call for improvements — but not to require exact models of regulation or licensing.

There have been numerous contacts between Commission officials and parties interested in the TV3 dispute and the Commission continues to follow developments very closely. Allegations of discrimination are taken very seriously by the Commission, as are the duties attached to the monitoring of Candidate Countries. The Commission will reflect developments in this sector as appropriate when presenting its 2003 Monitoring Report.