

(98/C 187/43)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3621/97****by Giuseppe Rauti (NI) to the Commission***(13 November 1997)*

*Subject:* Working conditions of airline crew members

Is the Commission aware of the controversy raging in almost all of the Member States — Italy in particular — regarding the working conditions of airline crew members (pilots, flight engineers and cabin staff)?

Those concerned maintain that their working conditions have become particularly stressful owing not least to increasingly fierce competition between airlines over recent years, which has resulted in a heavier workload for staff. Research carried out by Professor Scano indicates that this is seriously weakening crew members' immune systems, increasing their vulnerability to infections (tropical diseases in particular).

Given the above, does the Commission intend to take action in support of air crews?

**Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission***(21 January 1998)*

As the Honourable Member is probably aware the civil aviation sector is excluded from Council Directive No 93/104/EEC of 23 November 1993 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time <sup>(1)</sup>.

The Commission is currently engaged in preparing proposals to regulate working time and rest periods in this sector. Current initiatives are based on the responses to the Commission white paper of July 1997 on sectors and activities excluded from the working time Directive. Proposals should be adopted by the Commission by summer 1998.

However, Council Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work <sup>(2)</sup> requires employers, within the context of their responsibilities, to take the measures necessary for the safety and health protection of workers. One of the general principles of prevention on which the employer has to base the implementation of these measures is 'developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors related to the working environment' (Article 6.2(g)).

The Directive has been transposed by Italy and it is for the Italian authorities to decide how it should be put into practice.

The Commission has identified the prevention of stress at work as an important health and safety issue, and intends to develop guidelines on stress at work, which take into account the recommendations of the 'Report on work-related stress' produced by its tripartite advisory committee for safety, hygiene and health protection at work and which is sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

The Commission believes these actions are also suitable for application to specific industries or occupations.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 307, 13.12.1993.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 183, 29.6.1989.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3624/97****by Luciano Vecchi (PSE) to the Commission***(13 November 1997)*

*Subject:* Guarantees required in respect of participation in the employment initiative in Austria

As has already been pointed out in earlier questions, the Italian authorities' decision to require non-profit-making undertakings to provide bank guarantees in order to participate in employment initiatives has proved costly and punitive for undertakings which obviously have difficulty in providing financial guarantees of their own.