

**Answer***(19 March 1998)*

On 6 October 1997 the Council of the European Union decided to extend for a new period of six months the Common Position on Burma. This Position was initially adopted on 28 October 1996<sup>(1)</sup> and contains administrative sanctions such as restricting movement of all military personnel of Burmese diplomatic missions in the European Union, bans all military equipment sales to Burma, imposes visa restrictions for members of the ruling council and their relatives as well as it suspends all high-level talks between the European Union and officials of the regime. As it is considered unlikely that the recent replacement of some members of the Burmese leadership, the dissolution of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and the establishment of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) will lead to substantial changes, the policy of the Union remains for the time-being unchanged.

This policy is well known. The Union has on many occasions issued strong public statements deploring the human rights situation and the lack of democracy in Burma. Time and again the Union has urged the SLORC to enter into meaningful dialogue with all democratic opposition parties, including the National League for Democracy who had some of its members arrested on 28 October 1997.

The Union monitors closely the developments in Burma and underlines constantly with its international dialogue partners, especially the ASEAN States, the need for reform in Burma and the important role these countries have in pressuring the rulers in Rangoon to adopt change.

The Council bodies are currently reviewing the Common Position on Burma, adopted on 28 October 1996. There is a wide consensus in favour of renewal for a further period of six months from 29 April, on which date this Common Position expires. At present, the Council does not envisage additional measures such as economic sanctions.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 287/96, 8.11.1996.

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(98/C 187/66)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3692/97****by Kirsi Piha (PPE) to the Commission***(19 November 1997)*

*Subject:* Effect on Estonia of changes to the tasks of the PHARE programme

The European Union gives aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe through its PHARE programme. The Commission's guidelines regarding the PHARE programme for the next few years have changed the aid system to some extent. What effect does the Commission consider these changes will have on aid to Estonia in 1998 as compared with 1997?

(98/C 187/67)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3699/97****by Kirsi Piha (PPE) to the Commission***(19 November 1997)*

*Subject:* Utilization of PHARE appropriations for Estonia

The European Union aids the countries of Central and Eastern Europe through its PHARE programme. A great deal of aid has presumably been provided from this programme for the development of the countries which have applied for membership of the EU. Can the Commission provide details of the utilization of appropriations granted under PHARE in 1997 for Estonia?