

The Commission will discuss the year 2000 and its implications through all the relevant contacts available in industry and Member States. In particular, attention will be paid to the impact on and preparation of infrastructure sectors, the impact on consumers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the potential impact on the functioning of the internal market, including economic and monetary union.

The Commission will, together with Member States, monitor progress, exchange information, and benchmark best practice while reporting regularly to the Council on the Community's progress towards year 2000 readiness and its related issues.

The Commission will examine, in the context of its policies such as those on industry, SMEs, consumers, and training, whether a further contribution could be made towards helping raise awareness and address year 2000 related problems.

Within the Commission itself, the so-called millennium bug is handled by the Informatics directorate for the central aspects and by each directorate general for their information systems.

Since mid 1996 awareness of the year 2000 problem is promoted continuously by the Informatics directorate inside the Commission. Working groups were established at the beginning of 1997 to support analysis and solutions to identified problems, and at the end of 1997 a contact group between the Informatics services of the different institutions was initiated.

The project scope was established in 1997 and necessary resources were allocated. 1998 will be the year to fix and solve possible problems and 1999 will be the critical year to test and implement the solutions. The project year 2000 inside the Commission is following the phased approach, applied widely in the private and public sectors including risk management measures.

As for the prevention of new viruses spreading, the Commission is constantly upgrading the anti-viruses software used after virus attacks. Protection against computer viruses requires a constant effort to raise the awareness of IT professionals and users. It also requires a constant updating of the technology for detection and destruction of computer viruses. Within the Commission, the Security office and the Informatics directorate regularly organise awareness raising campaigns in co-operation with all other directorates general. Anti-virus software is in constant evolution, and is continuously assessed, updated and upgraded. The necessary guidelines for use are developed for all IT systems.

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(<sup>1</sup>) COM(98) 102.

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(98/C 304/44)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0114/98**

**by Anita Pollack (PSE) to the Commission**

*(30 January 1998)*

*Subject:* Urban policy

What plans has the Commission made to date for the Urban Forum planned for November 1998? Is there a date, venue and participation list agreed yet and will the European Parliament be invited to participate?

**Answer given by Mme Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission**

*(26 February 1998)*

The Commission intends to organise the Urban forum in Vienna on 26-27 November 1998 with the support of the city of Vienna. The participation list will be decided in the near future. The Commission hopes that the Parliament will be a major participant.

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