

any decision it might take will take account of the answers to the social and environmental questions raised by such a project.

---

(1999/C 297/085)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3297/98**

**by José Barros Moura (PSE) to the Commission**

(9 November 1998)

*Subject:* Transfer of Macao to Chinese administration — troops

In 1975 Portugal withdrew its military forces from the territory of Macao, the size of which did not justify a military presence. The Sino-Portuguese joint declaration grants the Central Government of the People's Republic of China exclusive competence in the area of defence and foreign policy, it being understood by the two parties that no Chinese troops would be stationed there. This was confirmed in April 1997 in the European Parliament by Mr Lu Ping in reply to my question.

Nevertheless, the Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen has now announced to the Preparatory Commission meeting in Beijing that China will send troops to Macao as a symbol of sovereignty.

How does the Commission assess this fact from the point of view of the credibility of China's commitments to the principle of 'one country, two systems'?

**Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan on behalf of the Commission**

(23 November 1998)

The Commission is aware that after having administered the enclave of Macau since 1553, the Portuguese government decided in 1975 to withdraw its military forces from the territory. Under the terms of the Sino-Portuguese declaration of 1987, China will resume the exercise of sovereignty over Macau from 20 December 1999. Under Article 14 of the Basic law of the Macau special administrative region of the Peoples Republic of China, the Central Peoples Government shall be responsible for the external defence of the Macau special administrative region. The government of Macau shall be responsible for the maintenance of internal public order.

The Commission strongly supports the application of the 'one country, two systems' policy to the future special administrative region of Macau, and will continue to co-operate closely with the territory under the Community-Macau Trade and co-operation agreement. The Commission will carefully monitor developments regarding the transfer of sovereignty.

In this context the Commission attaches utmost importance to the principle that law enforcement, crime prevention and the maintenance of public order are tasks which will be the responsibility of the authorities and the judiciary of the special administrative region. Under the Basic law these tasks cannot be the responsibility of any Chinese military presence stationed in Macao. The only conceivable justification of such a presence would be to deal with external threats to Macao's security, which is not currently apparent.

---

(1999/C 297/086)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-3314/98**

**by Rijk van Dam (EDD) to the Commission**

(27 October 1998)

*Subject:* The detained leader of the United People's Party of Azerbaijan, Alakram Gumbatov

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation of the detained leader of the United People's Party of Azerbaijan, Alakram Gumbatov, whose wife is living in the Netherlands as a refugee?
2. How does it view the fact that Gumbatov has been held without trial and that the criminal proceedings and the file on the case are not being disclosed to the outside world?