

investigation, the Gibraltar tax schemes have not been notified. The examination will determine whether the measures concerned constitute state aid under Article 92(1) and if so, whether or not they can be considered compatible under one of the derogations of Article 92(3).

<sup>(1)</sup> SEC(98) 1800 final.

(1999/C 341/180)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0553/99**

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

(12 March 1999)

*Subject:* Age limits for staff recruitment

When the Commission reviews its staff procedures in the next few months, can we have an assurance that the present discriminatory age limits for staff recruitment will be abolished?

**Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission**

(8 April 1999)

On 21 January 1998 the Commission decided to gradually abolish age limits in competition notices <sup>(1)</sup>. It began by setting an age limit of 45 for all staff recruitment competitions, following the approach adopted by the Parliament's Bureau on 20 October 1997. During interinstitutional discussions on the reflection group report on personnel policy the other institutions expressed their willingness to raise the age limit to 45. But this does not mean that the other institutions necessarily share the Commission's views regarding the gradual abolition of age limits in competition notices.

The question of age limits will be raised during interinstitutional discussions in autumn 1999.

<sup>(1)</sup> SEC(97) 2416 and SEC(97) 2417.

(1999/C 341/181)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0554/99**

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

(12 March 1999)

*Subject:* Public health and the urban environment

Has the Commission given any thought to the need to create an EU-wide network of city health departments for the purpose of exchanging best practice on the social and urban aspects of health policy?

**Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission**

(12 April 1999)

The Commission does indeed pursue a broad approach to health policy, involving social and urban aspects. Under the current set of public health programmes developed in the context of the Commission's 1993 framework for action in the field of public health <sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission is already providing support to a number of city networks, including a European network for public health in capital cities and regions.

Within the framework of the European sustainable cities & towns campaign, the Commission is also supporting activities by the World health organisation (WHO) healthy cities project, a long-term international development project that aims to place health high on the agenda of decision-makers in the cities of Europe. Approximately 1 100 cities and towns are linked with 26 national and several regional and thematic healthy cities networks in Europe. Activities include the preparation and dissemination of case studies and the development of multi-city action plans.