

(2000/C 170 E/066)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1636/99**by Graham Watson (ELDR) to the Council**

(20 September 1999)

Subject: Working in Europe over the age of 60

Is the Council aware that France is refusing to adopt one of the joint aviation regulations, which allows holders of airline transport pilots licences to continue to fly up to the age of 65?

France has refused to recognise this new age limit and, as a result, no pilot over the age of 60 may fly over or into France while in charge of a public transport operation. What pressure will the Council put on France to ensure compliance with joint aviation regulations? What obligations are the Member States under as regards the mutual recognition of licences?

Reply

(22 November 1999)

Article 4(5) of Council Directive 91/0670/EEC of 16 December 1991 on mutual acceptance of personnel licences for the exercise of functions in civil aviation lays down that the validation of pilot's licences is authorised where the bearer satisfies the special requirements laid down in the Annex to the Directive. The Annex stipulates an age limit of 60.

If a Member State refuses to let holders of airline transport pilots licences continue flying up to the age of 65, its authorities are correctly applying Directive 91/0670/EEC.

A similar approach is taken by the International Civil Aviation Authority. Annex I to the Chicago Convention prohibits pilots from taking the commands of commercial flights after the age of 60. Any relaxation of that rule does not have binding effect.

(2000/C 170 E/067)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1637/99**by Avril Doyle (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(15 September 1999)

Subject: Legal documentation forwarded to the Commission regarding the establishment of the EU Food and Veterinary Office at Grange, Co. Meath, Ireland

When exactly was the legal documentation regarding the construction of the EU Food and Veterinary Office in Grange, Co. Meath, Ireland presented by the Irish Government's Office of Public Works to the Commission, why has it not yet been signed, and when is it likely to be signed?

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(11 October 1999)

The Office of Public Works presented the legal documentation regarding the construction of the Food and veterinary office (FVO) in Grange, Co. Neath to the Commission through the Commission's solicitor on 8 June 1999.

This documentation was necessary to allow a global verification of the clauses of the contract including financial commitments; an internal procedure requiring the visa of many departments of the Commission; and a memorandum to the budgetary authority in accordance with the statements made by the Commission in preliminary draft supplementary and amending budget No 1/97⁽¹⁾ which stipulated that 'the Commission will inform the budgetary authority of the long-term costs of the Grange project as soon as the total costs are known'.

The internal procedures were completed on 10 September 1999 when the Commission adopted a Communication ⁽²⁾ to the budget authority on the acquisition of the new building for the FVO in Grange. The contract was subsequently signed on behalf of the Commission on 13 September 1999 and transmitted to the solicitors.

⁽¹⁾ SEC(97) 750 final.

⁽²⁾ SEC(1999) 1324.

(2000/C 170 E/068)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1640/99

by Norbert Glante (PSE) to the Commission

(22 September 1999)

Subject: Allowing applications from German Landkreise for twinning assistance

The current programme to assist town twinning schemes is intended to help bring together the people of Europe with a view to overcoming the differences that divide them. According to the report on assistance by the European Commission for 1999, applications from German Landkreise (rural districts) for category I projects eligible for assistance, covering town twinning projects bringing citizens together, are not allowed.

Under the local government arrangements laid down in Germany's constitution, Landkreise belong to the category of local authorities, and in that respect are equal in status to cities and municipalities. German Landkreise cooperate both with local authorities in the other Member States and the newly-formed rural districts in CEECs in projects to bring citizens together, and make a valuable contribution to building a strong Europe.

1. Does the Commission consider the unequal way in which cities and municipalities, on the one hand, and German Landkreise, on the other, are treated to be legal?
2. If so, what is the justification for treating them differently?
3. Does the Commission intend to amend the criteria for assistance for town twinning projects to bring citizens together (category I projects) for the year 2000 in order to make German Landkreise eligible to apply?

Answer given by Ms Reding on behalf of the Commission

(4 November 1999)

The criteria applied with regard to the allocation of funding under the Community town twinning programme were decided by the Commission in close consultation with the representatives of the various Parliament committees and the national associations of local authorities, meeting in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. These criteria are revised annually and are listed in a widely-distributed note on the subject of Commission assistance for town twinning.

At the last consultation meeting on 8 December 1998, it was decided that, because of the funds available, it would not be appropriate to include Landkreise under category I of this programme in 1999. However, the note states that twinning activities involving towns in the same region may benefit from assistance under category II.

The criteria for 2000 will be decided at the conference on European Town Twinning for the Third Millennium to be held in Bilbao on 3-5 December 1999.