

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

(15 May 2001)

The Commission rejects any attempt to use the educational system as a vehicle to promote intolerance and to hinder the efforts achieved so far by the different parties committed with peace in the Middle East. In this context, it is particularly regrettable that school children may be exposed to intolerance and mutual incomprehension in any of the parties involved in the conflict.

The Commission has always focused its assistance to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and human rights in the Middle East. In this regard, Article 2 of the Community-Palestinian Interim Association Agreement clearly states that mutual co-operation between the Parties 'has to be based on the respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the universal declaration on human rights, which guides their internal and international policy ...'.

None of the projects in support of the Palestinian Authority financed by the Commission have supported the production or distribution of school textbooks. Assistance to the educational system has focused mainly on infrastructure, equipment for schools and libraries and direct assistance for current school expenses (salaries, dining rooms, etc. ...).

No request has ever been made by the Palestinian Authority to finance curricula and textbooks. When a request for assistance is submitted to the Commission, an assessment is made on whether the proposal falls under the scope of the Community strategy and principles in that particular policy area. On that basis the Commission decides whether or not to fund the relevant project. In addition, the Commission – through the relevant mechanisms established under the MEDA regulations is fully involved in the programming, preparation, implementation and monitoring of assistance projects to the Middle East Peace Process in general, and to the Palestinian Authority in particular.

(2002/C 40 E/012)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0649/01**

**by Raffaele Costa (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(6 March 2001)

*Subject:* Building of a thermoelectric power station and a disposal plant for toxic and dangerous waste

The company 'Sir Industriale', part of the Edison group, has announced its intention to convert a former industrial plant, in the municipality of Casei Gerola (LA), into a thermoelectric power station and a disposal plant for toxic and dangerous waste.

To be precise, it intends to build a co-generation combined cycle power station running on natural gas and to build connected plants (for the production of fine chemical intermediates, technical gases and organic carboxylic acids).

Citizens are protesting because the announcement was only made at the last minute, shortly before the deadline for the conference provided for by the law for the purposes of discussing any possible objections to the project, despite the fact that the Casei municipality had been aware of the project for months. Furthermore, it would appear that conversion work inside the plant has been under way for some time already.

Can the Commission say what the European authorities intend to do about the fact that the citizens of Casei were notified of the project too late?

In addition, has the Commission proposed, or does it intend to propose, appropriate legal measures aimed at defending and protecting public health against growing threats from both old and new forms of pollution?

**Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission**

(29 May 2001)

Under Article 2 of Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment <sup>(1)</sup>, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997 <sup>(2)</sup>, Member States are obliged to ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Projects covered by this provision are identified in the annexes of the Directive.

Article 4 of the Directive states that projects listed in Annex I are made subject to an assessment in accordance with Articles 5 to 10. For projects listed in Annex II, the Member States shall determine through: (a) a case-by-case examination, or (b) thresholds or criteria set by the Member State whether the project shall be made subject to an assessment in accordance with Articles 5 to 10.

In particular, Article 6, paragraph 2, of the same directive provides: Member States shall ensure that any request for development consent and any information gathered pursuant to Article 5 are made available to the public within a reasonable time in order to give the public concerned the opportunity to express an opinion before the development consent is granted.

On the basis of the information given by the Honourable Member, the work to which the question makes reference, a project to convert a former industrial plant into a hazardous waste treatment plant and an electric power station, could fall within the scope of Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended. It could be a project of the classes listed in Annex I of the Directive (class 2 Thermal power stations and other combustion installations with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more or class 10 Waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment as defined in Annex IIA to Directive 75/442/EEC under heading D9 of non-hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 100 tonnes per day) or it could be a project of the classes listed in Annex II of the Directive (class 11b Installations for the disposal of waste — projects not included in Annex I or class 3a Industrial installations for the production of electricity — projects not included in Annex I).

Not being aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member, the Commission will take the appropriate steps in order to gather detailed information about it and to ensure the observance of Community law.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 175, 5.7.1985.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 73, 14.3.1997.

(2002/C 40 E/013)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-0841/01**

**by Malcolm Harbour (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(13 March 2001)

*Subject:* Directives and regulations

Would the Commission please indicate:

- how many directives and regulations were originally proposed during 2000 and in January and February 2001, by the directorates-general for which the following Commissioners were responsible: Mr Bolkestein, Mr Byrne, Mrs Diamantopoulou, Mr Liikanen, Mr Solbes Mira and Mrs Wallström,
- how many directives and regulations, for which a Business Impact Assessment was made before they were enacted, over the same period?
- What was the cumulative cost to business for those directives or regulations where an Impact Assessment is available?