

This gives rise to the following questions:

- does the Council endorse the Commission's view that parliamentary control at European level would 'not only increase the accountability of trade policy but also its efficiency because our trading partners would know that the Commission negotiates with the full backing of the democratically elected representatives of European citizens'?
- If so, what will the Council do to develop full parliamentary control over European trade policy?
- If not, on what grounds does the Council not intend to develop full parliamentary control over European trade policy, despite the Commission's arguments?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 261 E, 18.9.2001, p. 160.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 261 E, 18.9.2001, p. 21.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 163 E, 6.6.2001, p. 190.

Reply

(29 November 2001)

The Council attaches great importance to its regular contacts with the European Parliament in the area of commercial policy, in particular through the appearances of the Council Presidency before the Commission on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy. These contacts enable the Council to maintain dialogue with the Parliament and to keep abreast of the Parliament's concerns regarding the Community commercial policy.

Moreover, the Council regularly briefs the European Parliament on the salient aspects of Community commercial policy and, under the 1973 'Westerterp procedure', keeps the European Parliament informed of trade agreement negotiations with third countries before the negotiations begin, as they progress and when they are concluded.

However, the decision-making procedures relating to Community commercial policy are defined in Article 133 of the Treaty establishing the European Community; the Council is bound to comply with those provisions, which were examined by the Intergovernmental Conference concluded at the Nice European Council. The amendments made to the wording of this Article did not cover the issues raised by the Honourable Member.

(2002/C 81 E/130)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2110/01

by **Olivier Dupuis (TDI) to the Council**

(12 July 2001)

Subject: Georgia/Chechnya: Russo and Robrillard affairs

On 16 October 2000, Antonio Russo, a correspondent of Radio Radicale (Italy) who was covering the war in Chechnya from Tbilisi, was found murdered a few kilometres from the Georgian capital. Since then, despite repeated requests, no data have emerged to shed light on the circumstances of his death or make it possible to track down his murderers. Recently it was learned that on 28 November 2000, a few weeks after the murder of Antonio Russo, Jan Robrillard, a French national and legal adviser in the human rights field for the OSCE mission in Tbilisi, had been found dead in his apartment. It emerged from the inquest that he died of suffocation following a gas leak. Well-informed sources state that Antonio Russo and Jan Robrillard knew each other and met regularly.

On the basis of these conclusions — which are, at the least, disturbing — it may reasonably be supposed that Jan Robrillard may have been the person to whom Antonio Russo had entrusted the video cassettes and documents in his possession, asking him to keep charge of them and translate and duplicate them ...

Some days before he was murdered in Tbilisi, Russo had told his mother on the telephone that he had come into possession of certain frightening and irrefutable proofs concerning the violence and massacres perpetrated in Chechnya by the armed forces of the Russian Federation and the use by those forces of weapons forbidden under the Geneva Conventions. These proofs were not found at Russo's house in Tbilisi.

Is the Council aware of these circumstances? Is it in possession of exact information concerning the inquest into Jan Robrillard's death and its conclusions? If so, what initiatives has it taken, including any with the Georgian, French or Italian authorities, to establish the possible links between the two cases and, therefore, to shed light on both?

Reply

(27 November 2001)

It was with great sorrow that the Council learnt of the untimely deaths of Antonio Russo and Jan Robrillard. Both of these men had chosen to work in important and difficult areas, and had demonstrated the strength of their commitment. Both of them clearly commanded the respect of their colleagues.

In the months since news of these two deaths became public, the Council has placed its faith in the Italian, French and Georgian police to investigate the surrounding circumstances. Representatives of EU Member States in Tbilisi, as well as the Commission Delegation there, maintain a constant watch on events, but the Council has not received any detailed information concerning the conduct or the outcome of enquiries.

The Council is certainly not in a position to comment on rumour or conjecture.

What is certain is the Council's public and vocal stance against violence on journalists, and in favour of the freedom of the media. In recent months, there has unfortunately been no shortage of occasions for the Council to restate its commitments on these questions.

As long as incidents of violence on journalists and restrictions on the freedom of the media continue in different countries, so the Council will continue to use all the channels of political dialogue available to it to draw attention to such abuses, and to press for them to cease.

(2002/C 81 E/131)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2113/01

by **Gordon Adam (PSE) to the Council**

(13 July 2001)

Subject: Temelin nuclear power plant environmental impact assessment

In light of the report on the above assessment, preparation of which was agreed in Melk in December 2000 and concluded with a public hearing in Vienna in June 2001, does the Council agree that the Czech Republic has fulfilled the commitments made at Melk? Does the Council also agree that there are no safety reasons why the commissioning of number one reactor should not proceed?

Reply

(27 November 2001)

The Council is not aware of the report. Neither is it involved in the assessment process mentioned by the MEP.