

When considering the most efficient way of consulting as widely as possible for the Review of the New Approach, it was thought that an internet-based consultation was preferable to a survey restricted to the known stakeholders, in terms of reaching a wider range of potential contributors. In further considering the best choice of format for such a consultation, it was decided that the interactive tool called 'Interactive Policy Making', already available within the Commission, would best suit the purposes of the consultation. The advantages of this tool were evaluated both in terms of the constraints on time and in the quicker processing of results than would be possible under a less structured consultation.

The consultation document itself is the result of accrued experience in the operation of the New Approach at Member State and Community level, and of extensive discussions with Member States over a period of time. This continuity, coupled with the inevitable changes in personnel over such a period, mean that the project involves teamwork rather than the result of the work of any one individual. A functional mailbox address was available on the consultation page, to facilitate any queries.

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(2002/C 205 E/264)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-0976/02**

**by Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(4 April 2002)

*Subject:* French ban on imports of British beef

In view of the European Court of Justice ruling in September 2001 that France has 'failed to fulfil its Community obligations' by continuing its ban on imports of British beef, and given the commercial losses being sustained by British producers as a result of this unilateral action, would the Commission please inform Members:

- What action it has taken thus far to lift the ban, given the ruling of the Court of Justice was given some six months ago?
- What reparation will be made to British beef producers in order to compensate for the illegal actions of the French?

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

(26 April 2002)

The judgement of the European Court of Justice in case C-1/00 Commission v French Republic was dated 13 December 2001.

Soon after the judgement, the Commission requested France to communicate details of the actions it would be taking to ensure compliance. In the absence of a satisfactory reply, a letter of formal notice under Article 228(2) of the EC Treaty was sent to the French government on 21 March 2002.

The infringement procedure now opened by the Commission could lead, if pursued to its conclusion, to the Court of Justice awarding a lump sum or penalty payment against the French government. There is, however, no provision under Article 228(2) for compensation of individuals.

In respect of the case law of the court concerning a Member State's obligations to make good the damage caused to individuals by a breach of Community law for which it is responsible, the Honourable Member is referred to the Commission's answer to written question E-3625/01 of Mr Huhne (!).

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(!) JO C 172 E, 18.7.2002, p. 99.