

**Joint answer
to Written Questions E-2370/02 and E-2371/02
given by Mr Lamy on behalf of the Commission**

(17 September 2002)

In order to prepare for the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations the Commission has conducted broad consultations in an attempt to ensure a balanced input into its preparations for the negotiations. In addition to general meetings on broader trade policy issues under the so-called Civil Society Dialogue, the Commission has hosted a series of specific meetings on the GATS negotiations with civil society, the last one on 2 July 2002. These meetings are open to all groups with an interest in GATS negotiations, including Member State representatives whether from central or local government. The Commission intends to continue this dialogue as the GATS negotiations moved forward.

The Commission's efforts to consult with civil society are of course supplemented by the consultations that take place at national level and which help shape the positions Member States adopt when the Commission consult them through the so-called ad-hoc 133 Committee (Services). However, responsibility for consulting with regional/local authorities falls in the Commission's view on the national authorities of each Member State in a manner best suited to their legal framework. The question therefore is perhaps more properly addressed to the national authorities of each Member State. The Commission has consequently not undertaken an assessment itself of the potential impact on the ability of local/regional authorities to regulate and deliver services nor is it aware of such an assessments having been done by others.

(2003/C 110 E/052)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2372/02
by Glyn Ford (PSE) to the Commission**

(2 August 2002)

Subject: GATS

We recognise that many of the concerns felt by local/regional authorities within the EU with regard to GATS, particularly the delivery of health, education and other essential services, are shared by sub-national governments across the world, including developing countries. Given that the EU is a major donor to developing countries in areas such as health and education, has the European Commission carried out an independent assessment of the potential impact of GATS on service delivery in these sectors and EU development policy?

Answer given by Mr Lamy on behalf of the Commission

(23 September 2002)

Since the European Communities have not included any requests for improved market access in the health and education sectors to developing countries in its initial requests, the Commission has not undertaken any specific assessment of the potential impact of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on service delivery in these sectors and Union development policy. Nevertheless, the Commission is working with some of the Member States and other major international partners to further document the potential impact of GATS on service delivery for poor people, both women and men, and to inform our positions.