

**Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission***(18 February 2004)*

The Commission is collecting the information it needs to answer the question. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

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*(2004/C 78 E/0733)***WRITTEN QUESTION P-0417/04****by Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(9 February 2004)*

*Subject:* Sackings from the Finex Group factory

The Finnish Finex Group owns a clothing factory in Nogueira, Maia, Portugal, which used to employ some 1 000 workers. Finex has already pressurised over half of them to accept dismissal agreements. Of the current 430 workers, some 300 women are now being pressurised to consent to unacceptable agreements on their dismissal by the end of this month. It should be noted that this company has received various subsidies.

Can the Commission answer the following:

1. How much Community subsidy has been paid to the Finex Group in Portugal and in other EU countries?
2. What measures are the Commission and the Portuguese Government going to take with a view to defending the employment and all the rights of Finex's workers, most of whom are women?
3. Is the Commission prepared to demand that the subsidies paid to the Finex Group should be repaid, if Finex continues to put pressure on its workers with a view to getting rid of them?

**Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission***(19 February 2004)*

The Commission is collecting the information it needs to answer the question. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

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