

Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan on behalf of the Commission*(2 February 1998)*

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in China is still a matter of constant concern to the Commission. It has never failed, where it believes there is justification, to express its concern about the human rights situation in Tibet in particular.

The Commission has no precise information on the facts reported by the Honourable Member. Should they be confirmed, the Commission — as in the past — would undoubtedly raise any infringement of human rights or assault on human dignity as part of the bilateral dialogue with China.

(98/C 196/59)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3967/97**by Reimer Böge (PPE) to the Commission***(12 December 1997)*

Subject: Need for a general directive on animal feedstuffs

Does the Commission agree that given the large number of directives currently in existence there is a need for a general feedstuffs directive to create a clearly defined and manageable framework for EU legislation in this field?

If so, what key objectives and principles does the Commission feel should be covered as a matter of priority?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(3 February 1998)*

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that, because of their large number, the directives governing feedingstuffs should be recast into a single directive as soon as convenient.

Work did start with this aim in view but it has had to be suspended, unfortunately, because of other more pressing problems.

The Commission agrees that the current legislation should be recast mainly with a view to simplification but without abandoning the objectives that saw its introduction in the first place, i.e. protection of animal and human health, environmental protection, maintaining feed quality and providing information for livestock rearers. Simplification should result in the adoption of rules that, because they are transparent, can be better applied by the various operators and by the feedingstuffs industry in particular.

(98/C 196/60)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3968/97**by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(12 December 1997)*

Subject: The year 2000 problem

The London Times of Sunday 23 November reports that a team of specialist consultants submitted a report to President Clinton, according to which the simultaneous introduction of the euro and the reprogramming of computers required for the transition to the date 2000 ('the year 2000 problem') poses insurmountable problems for Europe, both of a technical and economic nature.