

(2004/C 33 E/237)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2188/03****by María Sornosa Martínez (PSE)  
and María Valenciano Martínez-Orozco (PSE) to the Commission**

(2 July 2003)

*Subject:* Discrimination against pregnant women in grants made by the Ministry of Labour in Spain

The Institute for Women, which is a subsidiary organisation of the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, has recently called for applications for training placement grants whose application regulations include a clause suspending the placement and salary if participants give birth and decide to look after the baby for the subsequent 16 weeks (Regulation TAS/939/2003 published in BOE [Official State Journal] 93 on 18 April 2003).

Does the Commission consider that this condition in the regulations governing the award of these grants complies with Directive 92/85/EEC <sup>(1)</sup>?

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

**Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission**

(4 August 2003)

With regard to the matter brought to its attention by the Honourable Members, the Commission intends to contact the Spanish authorities to find out how these grants are awarded.

At first glance, it would appear that the possibility of an infringement of the Community legislation governing the equal treatment of men and women cannot be ruled out in this case.

(2004/C 33 E/238)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2192/03****by Paulo Casaca (PSE) to the Commission**

(2 July 2003)

*Subject:* Testing methods for dairy products

Could the Commission supply an updated list of the Community legislation in force relating to testing methods and inspection techniques used for milk and dairy products, with particular reference to methods for detecting micro-organisms?

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

(4 August 2003)

Analyses and tests normally carried out on milk and milk products aim at controlling, on the one hand, their safety and on the other hand, their quality and composition.

With regard to the safety of milk and milk products, the relevant requirements currently in force are those laid down in Council Directive 92/46/EEC of 16 June 1992 laying down the health rules for the production and placing on the market of raw milk, heat-treated milk and milk-based products <sup>(1)</sup>. Certain reference methods used to test against the different criteria set out in the above Directive are laid down in Commission Decision 91/180/EEC of 14 February 1991 laying down certain methods of analysis and testing of raw milk and heat-treated milk <sup>(2)</sup>. However, some of the methods have been subject to adaptations or replaced by new techniques, since they were prescribed in this Decision, in accordance with the recommendations of the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) for the analysis and testing of milk and milk products. It is indeed one of the duties of this laboratory to provide national reference laboratories (NRLs) with details and updating of analytical methods, to co-ordinate research into new

analytical methods and to inform NRLs of advances in this field. The Commission together with the CRL is currently preparing an amendment to Decision 91/180/EEC to be proposed in the near future for approval by the Member States. This will be based on the latest list of reference methods recommended by the CRL. This list will be sent direct to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat for information.

In addition, food business operators may use, in routine testing, alternative analytical methods when these methods provide equivalent guarantees and have been validated against the reference methods set above. These alternative methods are not subject to official listing in Community legislation.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 268, 14.9.1992.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 93, 13.4.1991.

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(2004/C 33 E/239)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2202/03**

**by Fodé Sylla (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

*(27 June 2003)*

*Subject: The June 2003 elections in Togo*

1. Is Togo one of the priority countries this year for the sending of election observation missions?
2. When was the Commission asked to send observers to the Togo elections, what was the answer from its interlocutors, and why did it refuse to send an observation mission?
3. Can it give me specific information about the existence of a confidential 'Protocol for a meeting of Togolese political forces' which, it is alleged, was drawn up by Commission officials?
4. What is the European Commission's position on the June 2003 elections in Togo?
5. Is it aware of the report of the Commission's representative in Togo on the intimidation to which Mr Yannick BIGAH (ACAT) was subjected and the violence that marred the conduct of the ballot of 1 June 2003?

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

*(14 July 2003)*

1. Togo did not figure on the priority list for EU election observation missions in 2003. Nevertheless, Togo was one of the countries that could have been added to the list in the event that pre-electoral conditions were sufficiently favourable to allow the dispatch of such an observation mission.
  2. A formal request from the Togolese authorities for the EU to send a Union election observation team was sent on 6 May 2003. However, in early April 2003 the Commission had already informed the Government that it would be impossible to dispatch an election observation team since the Government did not agree to the dates and terms of reference of a Commission exploratory mission. This mission would have assessed the pre-electoral situation, the human rights situation and the possibility to send an election observation team.
  3. The Commission was not involved in drawing up any confidential 'protocol for a meeting between the political forces in Togo'.
  4. The Commission considers that the election process was not credible.
  5. The Commission receives regular political reports from its representative in Lomé, including on the case of Mr Bigah as well as on events that occurred on polling day.
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