

(2000/C 203 E/063)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1804/99****by Jens-Peter Bonde (EDD) to the Commission**

(12 October 1999)

*Subject:* Parallel imports

Will the Commission propose a change in the law to improve the position of parallel imports?

Following the judgment in the Silhouette case, parallel importers are prohibited from purchasing trade-marked goods outside the EU and selling them in the EU unless the trade-mark owner has consented to the sale. On 19 May 1999, the Danish Ministry for Trade and Industry pointed out that parallel imports secure cheaper goods for consumers, whereas the Silhouette judgment is to the detriment of consumers of parallel imports alone as Danish trade-marked goods producers do not benefit from the judgment. The corresponding Swedish report of 11 January is described in Direct Office 9/99, page 27.

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

(7 December 1999)

In 1998, the Commission commissioned a study on the economic effects of a possible change in the European trademark regime on exhaustion of trademark rights by the National economic research associates (NERA) Institute (the study is available on the Commission website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg15>). In April 1999 the Commission arranged for two hearings — one with the Member States and one with interested circles — to discuss the outcome of the NERA study. After a debate in the Internal Market Council on 10 June 1999, it was agreed that the Commission should present a document to examine certain key issues in greater detail. Depending on the outcome of discussions on the said document, the Commission will further develop its position on this important and complex issue.

(2000/C 203 E/064)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1809/99****by Paul Rübzig (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(12 October 1999)

*Subject:* Illegal imports of fish from Russia

Proof exists which indicates that, in connection with EU fish imports from various third countries, irregularities have been occurring for some considerable length of time. Such irregularities could, amongst other things, threaten the existence of businesses which fully comply with EU law.

In particular the following accusations may be made:

- EU registration numbers are allocated by the local authorities in Poland and Russia even though structural and other EU hygiene standards are not met and the procedure is allegedly the subject of illegal practices.
- Veterinary checks which are supposed to be carried out when fish are cleared for export are apparently only loosely enforced by the Polish authorities.
- Fish fillets from Kazakhstan and the Ukraine which may not be imported into the EU allegedly reach the EU market illegally via Poland and Estonia, where the fish are repacked.

What action is the Commission to take in order to prevent risks to health arising from illegal fish imports from third countries?

Are any inspection visits to the suspect countries to be undertaken and, if so, when?