

P-1370/03EN

Answer given by Mr Prodi  
on behalf of the Commission  
(15 May 2003)

Several Members of the Commission have been invited to and have participated in meetings of the Bilderberg group during their term of office, while others have been invited and have participated before becoming Members of the Commission and have not then participated during their term of office. It should be pointed out that in the group's rules there is no such category as "member of the group". The only category that exists is "member of the Steering Committee".

No Member of the Commission is a member of the Steering Committee. Personalities who do not belong to the Steering Committee of the Bilderberg group may be invited to the meetings.

Occasional participation at a meeting does not need to be mentioned in the declaration of interests provided for by the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, since the act of participating occasionally at one or another conference, or of receiving information on the activities of a group, does not necessarily mean that the person concerned is a member of or belongs to a group.

As regards participation at the next meeting of the Bilderberg group, which is due to take place from 16 to 18 May 2003 in Versailles, three Commissioners have accepted the invitation that has been extended to them on account of their functions, although they will not be participating on behalf of the Commission. The three in question are Mr Monti, Mr Bolkenstein and Mr Lamy. Their trip will be governed by the rules generally applicable in this matter.

As regards the Trilateral Commission, its rules preclude the participation of any member who holds public office. No Commissioner is therefore a member of the Trilateral, and no Commissioner has as yet voiced any intention of participating in a future meeting of the Trilateral Commission.