

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0336/04
by Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Embryo research financed from the EU budget

1. Why did the Commission, in the person of Mr Busquin, agree to the Portuguese compromise proposal, but later call it a misunderstanding? What prompted the Commissioner to withdraw his initial agreement?
2. Does the Commission agree that the moratorium was agreed upon because differing views on ethically controversial issues cannot be handled in exactly the same way as other disagreements in the Council, so that a compromise must be found to which all the Member States can agree?
3. Can the author of this question assume that the statement made by Commission President Prodi on 11 December 2002 to Bundestag President Thierse to the effect that it is for the Council to take the decision on embryo research is correct, and cannot be overruled by the individual opinions of a Commissioner who thinks differently?
4. In view of the rising number of ethically controversial issues, should consideration not be given to disregarding European Union measures when the Member States are not unanimous in their responses to ethical questions?