

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3974/00  
by Mario Mastella (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Problem concerning the charge imposed by the German Government on empty drinks bottles

As of 19 January 2001, the German Government plans to place a deposit of 0.50 DM on all non-returnable bottles or containers which contain drinks (including wine, beer, mineral water etc.).

As a result of this charge, German consumers would obviously be able to return the empties (glass bottles and cans) to the retailer where they had bought the various products. The retailer would be obliged to take back the empties and in turn return them to the supplier from whom he had bought the products. In addition to imposing an incredible workload on German importers in planning and organising transport to and from suppliers, this deposit charge would also raise imported product costs in comparison with domestically-produced products, with serious consequences for the whole market. In fact, those supplying the German market would find themselves having to face insoluble problems as regards empties returned in unimaginable states, which would of course be unusable.

Therefore,

- does the Commission not consider that a provision of this type might constitute a more or less open breach of Community regulations concerning the single market and the principle of free competition?
- If so, does it not intend to take any initiatives designed to eliminate, or at least to restrict, possible discrimination which could result for drinks suppliers from other Member States operating in the German market?