

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0115/02
by Markus Ferber (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, Tokyo

Malcolm Trevor, who was the manager of the above Centre for many years, recently published the book 'Japan: Restless Competitor' (Richmond, Surrey 2001). It includes striking descriptions showing how the METI's strong influence means that European managers invited there are only presented with Japanese government propaganda, and also how critical speeches highlighting real obstacles to imports and investment are prevented and obstacles placed in the way of contacts with European importers and managers who have experience in the country. The highly positive foreword to the book was written by James Moorhouse, the European Parliament's longstanding rapporteur on Japan.

Is the Commission taking any steps to ensure that managers whose trips to Japan have been financed by the EU are offered more objective information programmes?

In the light of the experiences of the past decade, does it still believe that the structure of the Centre, half of whose funds are provided by the EU, and in which the METI and its appointed co-director exercise a right of veto in all questions, is appropriate?

What action does it plan to take in response to this dilemma, which has been both unsatisfactory and very expensive for the European taxpayer?