

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0235/02  
by Karin Junker (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Future of European Documentation Centres

The network of European Documentation Centres (EDC) has been in existence for 30 years. There are now more than 500 centres both within and outside the EU. The centres have concluded an agreement with the Commission on the provision of documentation and training. In its communication on a new framework for cooperation on activities concerning the information and communication policy (COM(2001) 354 final), the Commission underlines the importance of the EDC by stating, inter alia, that 'the EDC are key information points'.

Despite the importance which the Commission rightly attaches to these centres, the post of head of unit responsible in the Directorate-General for Press and Communication has been vacant since April 2001. Complaints are also being made that, more and more frequently, even those documents listed in the monthly register of the Publications Office as being available free of charge are treated as not available for distribution to EDCs.

Can the Commission explain why the post of head of unit has remained vacant for so long, and when a fresh appointment can be expected? Why is information otherwise available free of charge not made available to the EDCs? How will the Commission involve the EDCs in the European Union's future information policy in a way commensurate with their importance, and what will it do to allay the concern felt by many staff regarding the future of the centres?