

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0866/02
by Francis Decourrière (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Passing on the family business - French law

In March 1998 the European Commission issued a communication urging the governments of the Member States to favourably review their national rules on the passing on of family businesses, arguing that the law on business inheritance was damaging to employment in the European Community.

Introduction of the euro in January 2002 has highlighted distortion of competition arising from the legal and fiscal regulations affecting French family businesses.

In this area French law seems to be persisting in lagging behind the other Member States.

When presenting its priorities for the European Union's future fiscal policy, the Commission pointed out that it intended to give particular attention to the fiscal problems facing individuals and businesses operating in the internal market.

Will the Commission be setting up coordinated action to deal with the fiscal obstacles and loopholes in the area of business taxation, particularly on the passing on of family businesses? Does it intend to review best practice in the Member States following the introduction of the euro, as it did in 1997?