

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1258/02
by Carlos Ripoll y Martínez de Bedoya (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Tax in the Balearic Islands

On 23 April 2002 the Government of the Balearic Islands adopted Law 7/2001 on a tax to be levied on stays in accommodation owned by holiday companies and to be paid into a fund which has been set up to improve tourist facilities and to protect the environment.

The explanatory memorandum to the law states that the extraordinary development of tourism has resulted in excessive spending on regional and environmental resources in the Balearic Islands and that maintaining the competitiveness of the tourist product in the area will require an effort on the part of the relevant institutions to ensure that it can be sustainably developed. Given the lack of sources of funding, the abovementioned tax is therefore being introduced.

What does the Commission think of this new tax and of the way in which it relates to the Community's 'polluter pays' principle?

Since it is stated in the explanatory memorandum that tourism as a whole is the cause of damage to the environment, should the tax not be levied on all the tourist industry's activities, in accordance with the abovementioned Community principle?

Does the Commission not consider that excluding a major sector of the tourist industry constitutes discrimination amongst the various service providers?