

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2208/02  
by Christoph Konrad (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Anti-competitive methods used when the weight of non-Austrian coaches is being checked in Austria

1. From the point of view of competition, what is the Commission's opinion of the fact that non-Austrian double-axle coaches are regularly pulled over in Austria for a weight check?
2. Should excess weight be determined, the Austrian police direct the coach companies involved to a specific subcontractor which (alone) has an office actually on the site of the authorities' weigh station. What is the Commission's reaction to such anti-competitive reference to a specific undertaking, especially in situations where the foreign coach companies have no realistic alternative (e.g. at night)?
3. What is the Commission's view of the fact that the service provider referred to will supply the 'penalised' coach companies with extra coaches in order to reduce the rate only at rates which are well above market rates? Is the Commission aware that, in addition, the service provider referred to does not provide the service agreed? In one instance reported to me, the subcontractor made the German travellers who had changed to one of his coaches alight therefrom before they had reached the Europe Bridge, thereby saving himself the cost of additional mileage and the Brenner motorway toll, although those amounts had been included in the price charged (EUR 650 + EUR 130 VAT).
4. What is the Commission's view of such distortion of competition? Has the Commission received other complaints of this nature, for example from the Netherlands?
5. Has a specific decision already been taken on this issue or consideration given to other ways in which such anti-competitive conduct may be punished?