

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3674/02  
by Paolo Pastorelli (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject:           The Foal Levy

The approach of the season for the birth of thoroughbred foals, starting in January 2003, once again raises the recurring problem of the Foal Levy imposed by the Irish authorities on all European horse-breeders who want their brood-mares to give birth in Ireland. Since the revenue from the levy is used to fund measures for the benefit of local breeders at the expense of those from other Union countries, does the Commission not consider that this practice, including the exemption for Irish and British breeders, constitutes a clear and unequivocal infringement of Articles 88 and 89 of the Treaty, by allowing unfair competition and measures aimed at circumventing the rules of a free market? Can it also provide relevant documentation to show why such a blatant legislative abuse is allowed and, if so, say what steps it intends to take to put an end to this practice, which discriminates against breeders residing in other Union countries?