

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3103/03
by Anna Karamanou (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The recruitment of child soldiers in the course of the seven-year war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has had tragic consequences, resulting in the mistreatment and death of thousands of these children, some of them less than 12 years of age.

According to the Amnesty International report published on 9 October 2003 in Brussels concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and child soldiers, the forcible recruitment of children, who are then put through punishing training sessions, assigned to arduous and highly dangerous duties and suffer sexual abuse by fellow soldiers and their officers, is standard practice.

What measures will the Commission take to ensure respect for human rights, international agreements on the protection of children's rights and compliance with the 1999 Lusaka Agreement on the cessation of hostilities and to oblige the transitional government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end the recruitment of child soldiers and take the necessary measures to ensure the full reintegration into society of those who have undergone this traumatic experience?