

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3122/03
by Nelly Maes (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Reduction of VAT on CDs and cassettes

At the recent Ecofin Council in Luxembourg 7 October 2003, Commissioner Bolkestein announced that the Commission was against any reduction in VAT on audio recording media and CDs as this might create distortions of competition.

Against the background of the current discussions in Unesco concerning the creation of an international legal instrument to safeguard cultural diversity, will the European Commission examine whether a reduction in VAT is feasible and desirable for CDs by new artists and/or artists singing in local or regional languages and/or home-grown musicians (irrespective of whether or not they sing in their own language) and/or for certain genres of music?

Is the European Commission prepared to authorise some reduced VAT rates for CDs with the specific aim of safeguarding cultural diversity?

If so, what steps will the Commission take to bring this about in the near future?

If not, what measures does the Commission consider have higher priority in safeguarding cultural diversity?