

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3369/03
by Cees Bremmer (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Detention of EU citizen in Thailand

Is the Commission aware of the sentencing of a European citizen, the Netherlands national Machiel Kuijt, to life imprisonment for alleged drugs dealing? Is the Commission aware that this sentence was handed down in appeal proceedings brought by the Thai Public Prosecutor after a lower Thai court had acquitted Machiel Kuijt in March 2002, and that neither the convicted man nor his counsel, Geert-Jan Knoops, has so far been allowed to see the grounds for the court's decision?

Is the Commission aware of the extremely inhumane conditions in which Machiel Kuijt has been held since 1997 in Klong Prem prison in Bangkok, where a strict regime of public corporal punishment is in force, murder and rape are everyday occurrences, water is scarce and visits by relatives have so far been permitted only twice a year?

Does the Commission agree that the above facts constitute a serious violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (particularly Articles 10 and 14), to which Thailand has been a party since 29 January 1997?

Will the Commission at the earliest possible opportunity bring pressure to bear on the Thai authorities to seek a fair and public judicial procedure and prevent Machiel Kuijt's being held in such inhumane conditions?