

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3461/03
by Peder Wachtmeister (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Corruption scandal within the Swedish retail monopoly undertaking Systembolaget AB

During the negotiations before Sweden's accession to the European Union, the Commission permitted Sweden to retain its State monopoly on the sale of alcohol, while stressing that all discrimination between national goods and goods imported from other EU Member States must be eliminated.

At present a corruption scandal is being exposed within the Swedish retail monopoly undertaking Systembolaget AB. 35 managers have been given notice that they are under suspicion of involvement in serious corruption. Three suppliers are the subject of a criminal investigation, one of them on suspicion of bribery. It is thought that over a long period certain suppliers have received preferential treatment in return for trips and gifts.

Will the Commission, in response to this, review Sweden's retail monopoly, and will the exclusive rights to the retail sale of alcohol in Sweden be questioned?