

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3524/03
by Giacomo Santini (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Eco-point scheme in Austria

As regards the issue of HGV transit in Austria and the Eco-point scheme, and now that the most recent attempt to reconcile Austria's claims with those of other EU countries has resulted in utter failure, further consideration of the matter has been held over until 25 November, on which date a fresh attempt to reach an agreement will be made.

It seems that the fault now lies with France and Germany, which appear to have done a volte-face and are now in favour of extending the Eco-point scheme beyond the 31 December 2003 cut-off point. Within the Conciliation Committee the Italian Government (in the person of an under-secretary, Paolo Uggè) has pointed out that both the Commission and the European Parliament are in favour of abandoning the Eco-point scheme.

Italy wished to reach an agreement with Austria whereby, for a further year, 20% of the Eco-points would be retained for vehicles in categories EURO 1 and EURO 2, whilst category EURO 3 would be left open. France and Germany rejected the agreement, since their HGV fleets are older, higher-mileage ones which include a significant proportion of highly polluting vehicles.

1. Is the Commission aware of the further difficulties which have recently been experienced in reaching an agreement, and what view does it take of the Austrian authorities' attitude?
2. What does the Commission intend to do in order to facilitate the conclusion of an agreement on the Eco-point scheme?
3. Has the Commission assessed the economic losses being suffered by EU haulage companies on account of the fact that the search for a solution to this EU problem has been postponed once again?