

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1411/04
by Ward Beysen (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Parallel trade in medicines

In reply to Written Question P-0193/04¹, the Commission stated on 19 February 2004 that it was planning to act under Article 82 of the EC Treaty, against supply quota systems imposed by big, mostly non-European, pharmaceutical companies.

The only possible reason to introduce such quotas is to limit parallel trade and to prevent medicines from circulating inside the EU. Parallel trade in medicines is constrained only by supply shortages, not by demand. Parallel-traded medicines provide the only competition on the European market to patent-protected innovative medicines directly imported by the manufacturer. They deliver savings of millions of euros per year to governments and patients alike.

Could the Commission indicate of how long it expects the ‘fact-finding’ to last and when it might launch investigations in response to the numerous complaints received.

¹ OJ C